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GAMEFAN

TRUE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE



Will the Dream Team Win the War?

Half-Life
Quake 3 Arena
Unreal Tournament
KISS Psycho Circus

Exclusive First Dreamcast Reviews!

Ecco the Dolphin
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2
Jet Set Radio

Tony Hawk Meets Its Match? Acclaim Unleashes Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX!

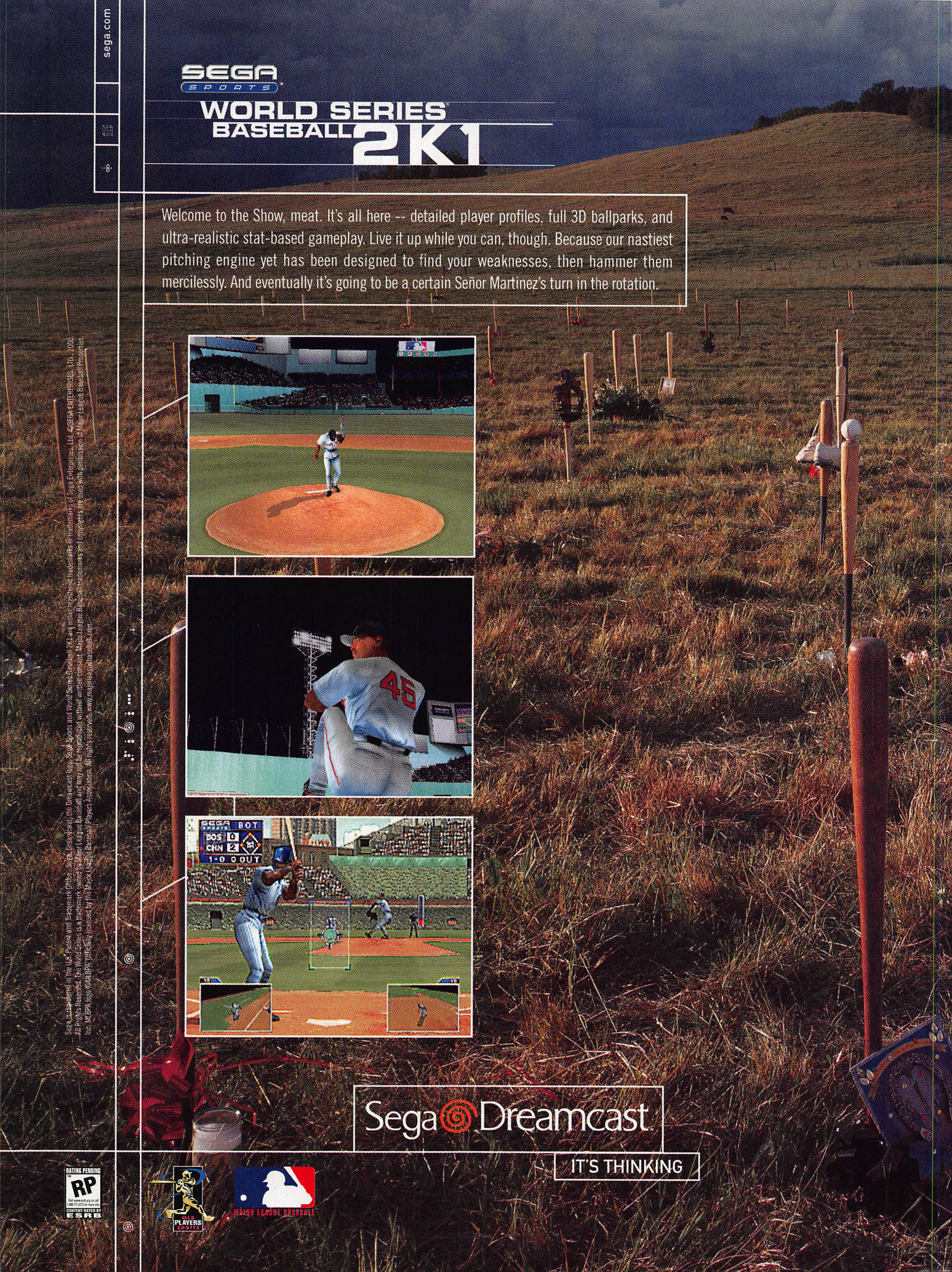
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Sega Dreamcast
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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL


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ED ZONE

Team GameFan

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ISSN# 1092-7212

By the time you read this, the Neo Geo Pocket's corpse has been cold and clammy for quite some time... Poor marketing (TV commercials at 3 A.M. on UHF?!), bad business (no third-party games and no means to capture screens for consumer magazines), a company that has no idea what it's doing (Aruze) and the overwhelming stranglehold Game Boy has on the market all conspired to put an end to an incredible little piece of hardware. Or, more importantly, the setting for an incredible array of **great** games—titles like *SNK Vs. Capcom, Pac-Man, Metal Slug, Last Blade, Sonic* and many, many more. But do you know who was most to blame for the failure of the Neo Geo Pocket in America? No, don't flog the dead horses that I did at the start of this paragraph. There's really only one person that's ultimately responsible for the demise of the NGP: you.

Does anybody remember my impassioned plea on behalf of *Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram* a few months back? Remember how I went on at length over the issue of "Even when we get what we want, we don't buy it" (which, thankfully, doesn't seem to be the case for that one)? That's the Neo Geo Pocket in a nutshell... Perhaps the most sickening detail of its retreat from U.S. shores is that gamers everywhere (including many of you holding this mag) ran at a rabid pace to clean out U.S. retailers of their NGP stock before SNK could do it. Now what does that tell you? That you waited till the company was dead and had closed up shop to show your support?! Is that logical? Does it make any sense? Is this what it takes to get people to buy products? If so, why doesn't Sega just announce it's retreating from the hardware market, watch all the lemmings run out and soak up all the consoles and software out there and then tell everybody it was simply a marketing ploy?! Does anyone else realize just how powerful apathy is? Does it take the destruction of a viable platform before people realize it's something they should've bought into ages ago? It's almost enough for me to question why I still get up here and rant on and on each month about this sort of thing when nobody listens...

And that's just the rub: What does it take to get people to buy something when it's new, and not when it's on its way out? It's not as if the NGP was discounted anywhere—people didn't even give retailers that chance—and now it's about as commonplace as Fury driving an American automobile... So what makes it so much more attractive for purchase after it's been discontinued? Because now, it's a "collector's item," and people are buying as much NGP gear as they can to post on eBay and sell for twice the money?! Does anybody that ran out and bought the console realize that they'll get **no** more localized software to play on it? Does anybody but us care?

Well, enough with the questions... I've done plenty of venting leading up to this Ed Zone, and I'm sure I'll do plenty more after it. Guess I'd better start taking those accelerated Japanese language courses if I want to be able to play great games like *Ogre Battle Pocket* properly... oh, and *Faselei* (though SNK was good enough to provide us with an English ROM shortly before its spectacular derailment).

And yes, I'm aware that many of you did go out and purchase a Neo Geo Pocket before SNK's massive implosion. I'm not angry with you, I'm angry with your fellow hard-core gamers that failed one of the most interesting and playable products to be released in a long, long time—certainly more so than the Japanese launch of the PS2 (and the pathetically poor Wonder Swan, which still trounces the Neo Pocket regularly in Japan).

On a lighter note (heh, like it could be anything **but** lighter), look for the return of Shooter Alley next month (the response has been phenomenal for its first run) and the long-promised expanded Graveyard (six pages a month, anyone?).

Editorial Director
Eric Mylonas

GameFan (USPS 014-907) (ISSN 1092-7212) Volume 8 Issue 9 September 2000. Published monthly by Shinno Media Corp. 6301 DeSoto Avenue Unit E, Woodland Hills, CA 91367. One year subscription (12 issues) is $23.99 (U.S.), $49.99 (Canadian), $69.99 (Foreign). Please remit in U.S. funds only. Please allow 60 days for your first issue. Periodicals Postage Paid at Woodland Hills, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address form to: GameFan, P.O. Box 630, Big Sandy, TX 75755-9811.

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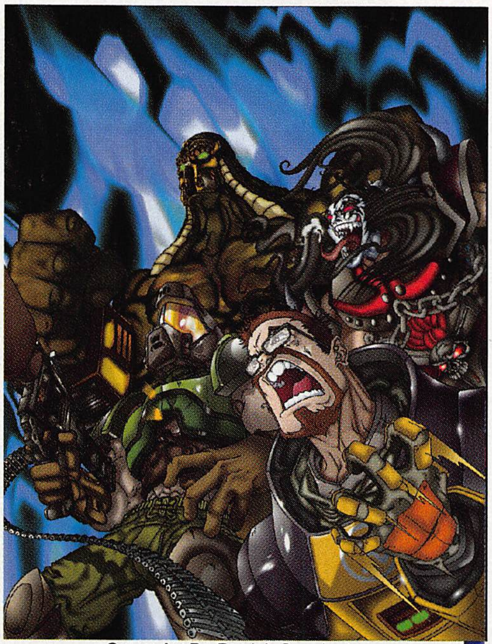


TEAM GAMEFAN

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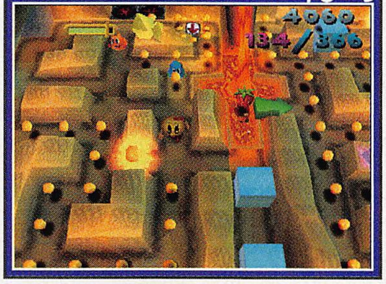
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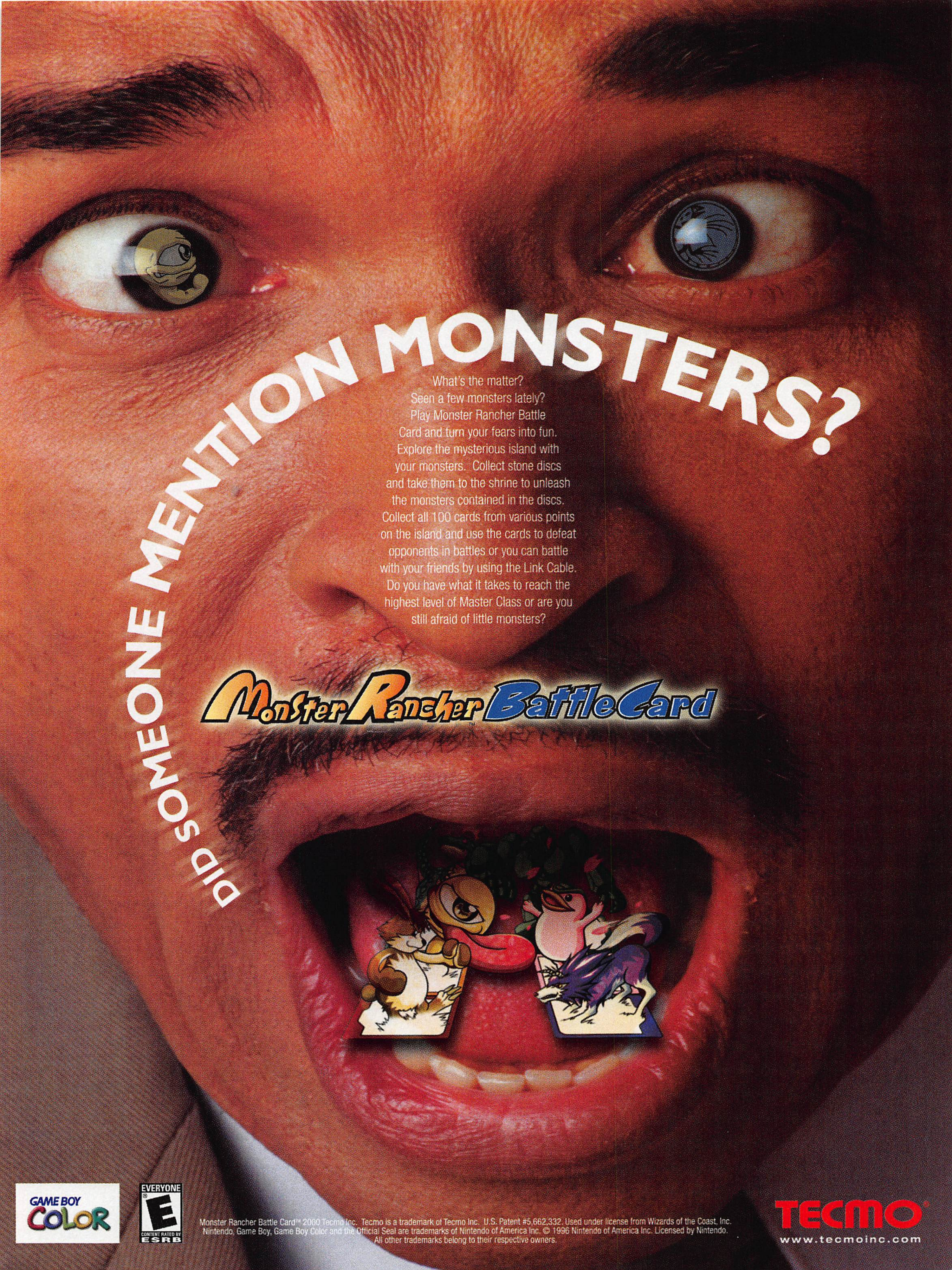
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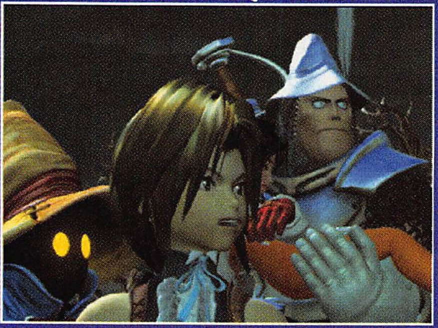
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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

September 2000

FINAL FANTASY IX

Publisher: Square EA



Reader's Top Ten

1) *Perfect Dark* - N64
2) *Legend of Mana* - PS
3) *SF Alpha 3* - DC
4) *Vagrant Story* - PS
5) *Dead or Alive 2* - DC
6) *Tony Hawk* - DC
7) *Syphon Filter* - PS
8) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC
9) *StarCraft* - N64
10) *NFL2K* - DC

Perfect Dark



Reader's Most Wanted

1) *Final Fantasy IX* - PS
2) *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* - DC
3) *Metal Gear Solid 2* - PS2
4) *Jet Grind Radio* - DC
5) *Ultimate Fighting Championship* - DC
6) *Zelda: Majora's Mask* - N64
7) *Quake 3 Arena* - DC
8) *Mario Tennis* - N64
9) *Tekken Tag Tournament* - PS2
10) *Bouncer* - PS2

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN

*IMPORT TITLE



ECM

1) *Metal Slug 3* - Arcade
2) *Mr. Driller* - DC
3) *Sky Blazer* - SNES
4) *Mars Matrix* - Arcade
5) *Cannon Spike* - Arcade
6) *Ogre Battle 64* - N64
7) *Guwange** - Arcade
8) *Tetris Plus** - Arcade
9) *Alien vs. Predator* - Arcade
10) *Mischief Makers* - N64



Kodomo

1) *Jet Set Radio** - DC
2) *SF Alpha 2* - Arcade
3) *Front Mission 3* - PS
4) *Tekken Tag Tourn.** - PS2
5) *X-Com* - PS
6) *Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2* - DC
7) *Space Channel 5* - DC
8) *Tobal 2* - PS
9) *Adv. Daisen Riyaku** - DC
10) *SF3: Double Impact** - DC



The Judge

1) *EQ: Ruins of Kunark* - PC
2) *Virtua Tennis* - DC
3) *Mario Tennis* - N64
4) *Worms Armageddon* - DC
5) *Ms. Pac-Man* - PS
6) *NCAA Football 2001* - PS
7) *Gain Ground* - Genesis
8) *Crazy Taxi* - DC
9) *Tony Hawk 2* - PS
10) *Dave Mirra Pro BMX* - PS



Eggo

1) *Diablo II* - PC
2) *Legend of Dragoon* - PS
3) *Lunar: Silver Star** - Sega CD
4) *Dracula X* - PC Engine
5) *Golden Axe 2* - Arcade
6) *Streets of Rage 3* - Genesis
7) *Jet Set Radio** - DC
8) *Samba De Amigo** - DC
9) *SF Alpha 2* - Arcade
10) *Barbarian* - C64



Fury

1) *Jet Set Radio** - DC
2) *SF3: Third Strike** - DC
3) *Ferrari F355* - DC
4) *Silent Scope* - DC
5) *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* - DC
6) *Ridge Racer 5* - PS2
7) *Perfect Dark* - N64
8) *Strider 2** - PS
9) *Space Channel 5* - DC
10) *SF Alpha 2* - Arcade



Reubus

1) *Unreal Tourn.* - Mac
2) *Virtua Tennis* - DC
3) *Jet Set Radio** - DC
4) *SF3: Third Strike* - PS2
5) *Blast Corps* - N64
6) *Quake 3 Arena* - DC
7) *Gunstar Heroes* - Genesis
8) *Gran Turismo 2* - PS
9) *SF Alpha 2* - Arcade
10) *Super Tennis* - SNES

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN MOST WANTED



- *Sonic Adventure 2* - DC
- *Dark Cloud* - PS2
- *Phantasy Star Online* - DC
- *Metal Gear Solid* - PS2
- *Dynasty Warriors 2* - PS2
- *Grandia 2* - DC
- *Cannon Spike* - Arcade
- *Skies of Arcadia* - DC
- *Munch's Oddysee* - PS2
- *Dragon Warrior VII* - PS

(In no particular order)

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

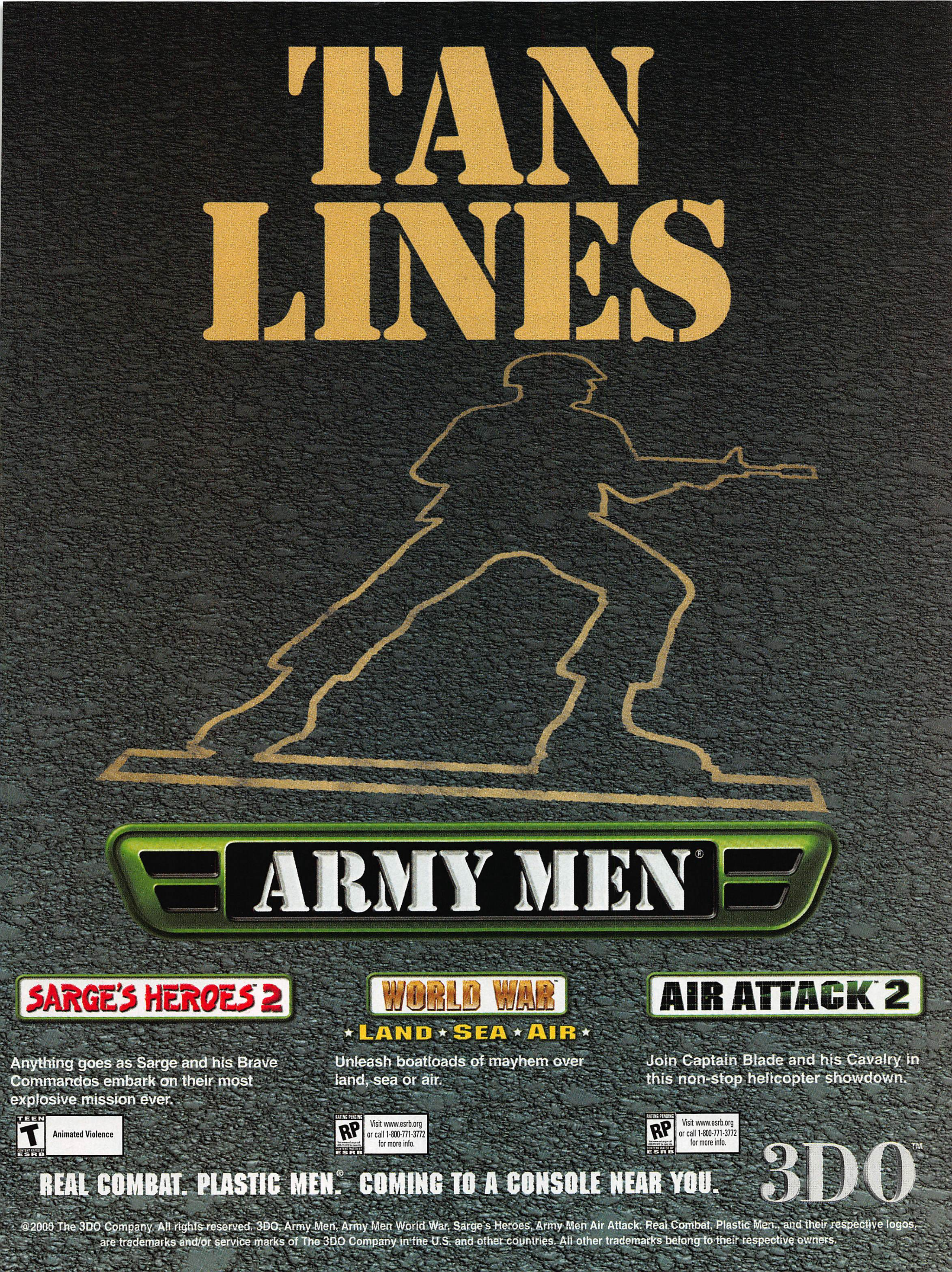
This Month's Guest:
Han Lee
Vice President of Game Production, Fat Tuna

1. ***Space Harrier*** (Arcade — This game gave me the dream to become a game developer)
2. ***Metal Gear Solid*** (PS — By far, the most flawless game ever made, IMHO)
3. ***Zillion*** (Sega Master System — Don't know why this simple game kept me playing over and over, finished it about 10 times!)
4. ***After Burner*** (Arcade — am I the only guy who could finish this game with one quarter at the arcade? It cost me a lot of money before I could do it, though…)
5. ***Darius Series*** (Arcade — The most intriguing, mysteriously magnetic shooters ever)
6. ***Street Fighter II*** original (Arcade — It's old, and beaten to death, but still makes me laugh when hearing "shoryuken!" and "yoga fire" with the same voice!!!)
7. ***Y's I*** (The original and the best. I used to tape the music and listen to it till the tape got all worn out.)
8. ***Power Drift*** (Arcade — I had spent the most quarters on this baby. My favorite arcade had an air conditioner right in front of the machine, and the wind gave a chilling sensation!)
9. ***Thunder Force II & III*** (Genesis — my heart beats faster)
10. ***Crazy Taxi*** (DC/Arcade — This is probably the only driving game that's more fun than real driving.)

Space Harrier



Publisher: Sega



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EDITOR ROUNDUP

Online gaming is the way of the future, whether you like to admit it or not. Sega's doing its part to bring us one step closer to that ultimate console goal with the imminent arrival of SegaNet. So what online games are our esteemed bunch of editors looking forward to playing against/with their friends? Let's find out, shall we...

ecm@gamefan.com



ECM

ECM and his shooter-loving followers are waiting for a versus shooter with online capabilities. Think *Twinkle Star Sprites Online*. Then you can find out who the fruitiest, greasiest, most pale, pimply-faced sausage with the best reflexes is.

ghiggins@gamefan.com



THE JUDGE

The Judge already has an online addiction in *EverQuest: Ruins of Kunark*. Recently, he totaled up his hours played after a year, and it averaged out to five hours a day. That's like a full job! Next stop? eBay, to sell his lvl 53 social deviant, err, bard.

eggo@gamefan.com



EGGO

Eggo can't wait till *Final Fantasy XI* (an online RPG) arrives. Then, not only can he play with his RPG-loving buddies around the world, but his RPG-loving girlfriend as well... assuming he can pry her away from, hide the children... *EverQuest*. .<cue maniacal laughter>!

fury@gamefan.com



FURY

"There can be only one!" Fury says. *Phantasy Star Online* is the lone online game he's looking forward to. It will make the Dreamcast the center of his living room universe, and <gasp>! it might even be incentive enough to buy furniture!!!

kodomo@gamefan.com



KODOMO

Other than a network-compatible console version of *Worms Armageddon*, Kodomo wants to see an online game with animated girls boasting large... upper dimensions. It wouldn't take much... all he wants is *Sakura Taisen's Dating Service*.



THE 6th MAN

The 6th Man wants to relive his XBand glory days by demonstrating mastery of games like *Street Fighter* and *Tekken*... against challengers like Super Teeter, Grandpa Wilbur, and nine-year-old Little Timmy, using his mom's laggy AOL account.

THE ART DEPARTMENT

tao@gamefan.com



TAO

Tao spent the majority of his online gaming with Blizzard games and *Quake II*, swearing never to play *EverQuest*... but talk of a *Star Wars EQ* really tugs at the emotional nerd strings, doesn't it?

Coming Soon

No, Reubus ain't gone... But we've got two new art department members who have yet to decide on their "alter-egos." Damned artistic types, never can make up their minds...

PRODUCTIVITY KILLER OF THE MONTH



Virtua Tennis

Height: n/a
Weight: n/a
Blood Type: A-
Special Abilities: The Moya Mullet

Other than the obvious appeal of being a tennis game in an office full of superstar gamers (or so they claim), Sega's *Virtua Tennis* was destined to be a productivity killer because it has mini-games that would make even Namco green with envy. Gamers who struggle through exercises such as knocking rubber balls out of the court in a short amount of time are rewarded with points which can be used to buy new players, partners, or equipment.

Of course, we don't really care about the reward. We just feel compelled to pick up the controller upon seeing The Judge struggle with what looks to be a simplistic version of bowling in a tennis game. Next thing you know, someone else fails, and another challenger steps up to the plate. Mnutes later, there's a crowd around the desk, cheering and jeering as someone attempts to complete the task put before him... and we have a certified Productivity Killer of the Month. Thanks, Sega.

This month in GameFan's BOX-O-FUN!

Monster Name Generator

"Cermy, leader of the Gorg, is on a quest to vanquish the evil master Tim from the land of Erek for all of time..." Sound like the script for a fantasy-based video game or book? Sadly, it's not. Instead, it's just the end result of a really strange meal we had the other day...

Walking into popular lunch hangout Dan's Subs, the GameFan crew discovered a long line of customers, with a single person writing down orders for people as they waited. This order-taker was a mysterious old woman with a penchant for generating awesome fantasy names without even meaning to. She would ask us for our order, and then our name. However, what we said and what she wrote down ended up being completely different. "George" was scribbled as "Gorg." "Eric" became "Erek." "Kim" was misconstrued as "Tim." And "Jeremy" metamorphosed into "Cermy."

We don't know if her peculiar ability is a result of addled old age or if she uses a strange shorthand that only she can comprehend. Either way, whenever we get around to finally making a game of our own, we're going to Dan's Subs so we can get some cool-sounding monster names. By then, we'll have a list prepared of names we would like transformed into nerd-speak. Prospective candidates awaiting nomenclature transformation include: Hannibal, Bartholomew, Anthony, and Josefina.

CHICKEN OF THE MONTH

Space Channel 5 Swag



While the game met with sizzling response at E3 and received positive reviews from most of the press, *Space Channel 5* didn't do so well at the retail level when it first came out.

However, that lukewarm reception didn't stop Sega from promoting Ulala and company to the fullest. Video game retailers received this sweet lunchbox-looking thing, with a hip *Space Channel 5* theme, complete with large scale Ulala on the cover and dancing Moraliens gracing the sides. In it, there was a promotional video which retailers could run on their TV's. While ours contained the game and a *SC5* techno soundtrack (it actually sounds really good, featuring many of the songs played at E3 when the gogo dancers were doing their thing, wowing the crowd who had an unusual vantage point, looking up at the dancers in mini-skirts).

Hopefully, sales of *Space Channel 5* will pick up when Sega puts a stronger push behind it come Christmas, because Ulala makes for a great potential Dreamcast mascot. She's got style, pizzazz, attitude... and her own lunchbox (at least, that's what we think this thing is).

SAUSAGE OF THE MONTH



We ran into Travis Saucier at the Anime Expo, a 24-year-old gamer out of Arkansas. Dressed as Seifer, complete with facial scar and costume, we couldn't resist asking him a few questions. As soon as he said *Final Fantasy VI* was his favorite *Final Fantasy*, we knew we had a winner. He's been a gamer ever since the Atari 2600 and his favorite genre is role-playing games. While he was dressed as a character from *FFVIII*, Travis thought the game was a little bland (we tend to share that opinion at the office) and could have used more characters.

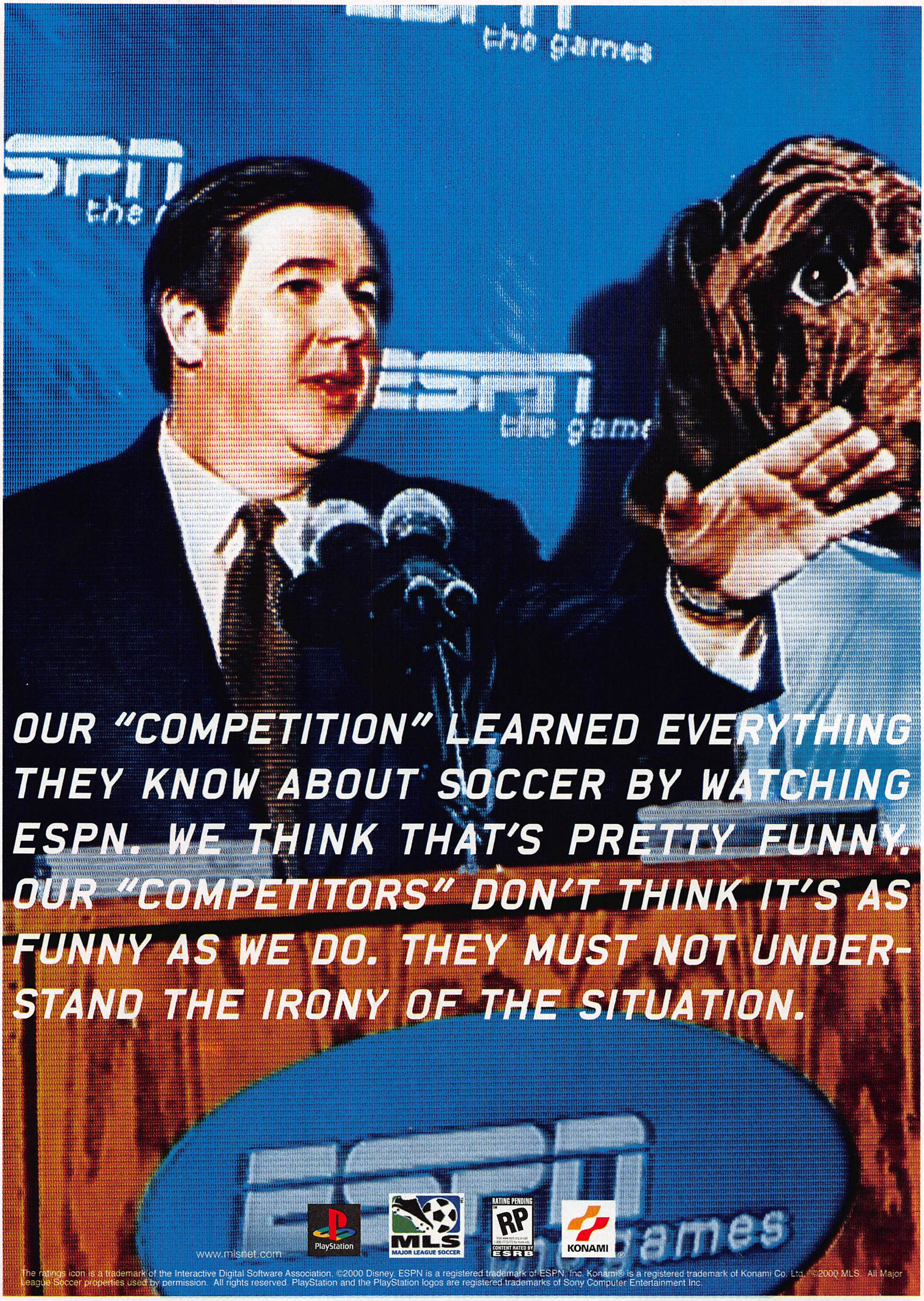


Do you want to open *GameFan* and see your handsome mug staring back at you? It's not that hard. Just dress up as a video game character and stand in a high profile area where we'll see you, or you can do it the easy way, by sending pictures and a story of how you're hard-core to Posty's mailing address. A few months later, you'll be in *GameFan*!


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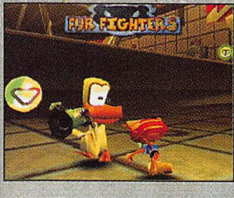








G — Graphics
C — Control
P — Play Mechanics
M — Music
O — Originality



Fur Fighters
Dreamcast
Acclaim
Adventure



Too big for its own good—that's *Fur Fighters* (this also applies to Fury's expanding waist line). It's so huge that you'll likely **never** see the end of it. While I can appreciate the nice graphics and the insane amount of work that must have gone into it, would a map function have been too much to ask for? Hell, while I was wandering through the labyrinthine levels I think I saw the Ark of the Covenant and Fury's old '93 Celica. Too ambitious...

G 8 C 7 P 5 M 6 O 7 — **73**



Spend five minutes with *Fur Fighters* and it's obvious where Rare got Conker's new persona. I mean how can you hate a game where you run around reducing fluffy critters to mince meat... or in this case, cotton stuffing. Add a killer engine to the fold and it seemed Bizarre could do no wrong. That is, until I got the feeling that the levels were far too open ended and the missions semed to draaaaag. Nice game, but limited in direction.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 7 — **82**



Ugh, talk about good ideas gone bad. On the surface, *FF* offers *Turok*-style control and massive enviornments to wander around. Problem is, I spent most of my time doing just that. The concept is novel (complete with humans for pets), but in the end it's just another average game with angular graphics and weaksauce hunt-&-find gameplay. The 2-player mode adds some fun to the mix, but I expected much more from Bizzare on this one.

G 7 C 7 P 6 M 5 O 8 — **71**



Silver
Dreamcast
Infogrames
Role Playing
Reviewed page 51



Gamers are kicking and screaming for DC RPGs, but I somehow feel that this isn't going to quench their thirst for a truly epic experience. The story is moderately cool, but the presentation screams (you guessed it) "PC port!" Washed out, dithered, lifeless backdrops, microscopically small polygonal characters and some difficult-to-control spots—makes this a fine time for a silver bullet... and I don't mean Coor's Light.

G 6 C 5 P 7 M 5 O 6 — **71**



Hey, it's an American take on *Sorcerian* with pseudo-3D combat (like *Resident Evil*, polygonal characters and pre-rendered backgrounds). While I'd recommend *Silver* over *Sorcerian*, the tiny 3D characters are a major turnoff. They're so small that sometimes it's hard to tell what's going on, and feeling their emotions is difficult as well. The voice acting is top notch, and this one is worth checking out on a lazy Sunday as a rental.

G 8 C 6 P 6 M 7 O 7 — **77**



After playing *Draconus*, the words "action/RPG" just don't sit quite as well with me. So when *Silver* arrived at the GameFan office, I was hesitant to get behind the controls. But truth is, *Silver* offers more RPG elements (and quality ones at that) than *Draconus* and, mixed with some incredible voice acting, it's really easy to get drawn into the story. The characters are a bit too small for my tastes but still shine against the nicely rendered backdrops.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 8 O 6 — **76**



Super Runabout
Dreamcast
Infogrames
Racing
Reviewed page 52



IF this game had arrived prior to Crazy Taxi, it might have been viewed in a kinder light... but it didn't. That it's merely a revved up PS game (and you know how much we love straight ports) doesn't help matters. The fact is, Climax can do better—much better (look at classics like *Landstalker* and *Dark Savior*). Interplay thought this one might be their ticket back to console respectability—sadly, the quest continues...

G 6 C 4 P 5 M 4 O 7 — **67**



Driver meets *Crazy Taxi*... reckless driving in time-based missions sweeping across a city. While the theme is unique (delivering ketchup and mustard bottles isn't something I do every day... Kodomo, maybe... but not I), the gameplay is far from extraordinary. In fact, it's somewhat bland. *Driver* grew tiresome for me after a few hours, and *Super Runabout* ended its stint in my Dreamcast in even less time.

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 8 — **72**



It's not tough to appreciate the Runabout series for the mayhem that it is, but at the end of the day it's nothing exceptional or fun. Give me a racer any day of the week, but force me to do stupid things (and deal with what might be the most exaggerated, unrelenting collision gravity ever) and you'll lose me early on. Stick around, if you must, and you'll be treated to frequent pop-up and gameplay that pales in comparison to Sega's *Crazy Taxi*.

G 6 C 7 P 5 M 6 O 7 — **70**



Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2
Dreamcast
Crave
Racing
Reviewed page 48



The undisputed king of Dreamcast racers roars across the finish line in style. Sure, the control is still a bit twitchy (hey, you got used to it last time) and the races still take place only at night, but with car models that destroy even *Gran Turismo 2K* on PS2 this game has the goods. Even if you don't like racing games (generally speaking: me) there's enough here to warrant a strong look... Crave: the best DC third party? Could be...

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 6 — **87**



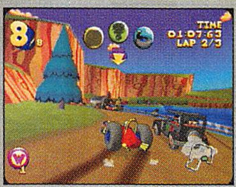
I'm glad that the main issue with the original *TXR* has been remedied in the sequel: control. It's not much more user-friendly and the graphics look that much better as well... even surpassing *Sega GT* in car models. The only thing I don't really like is the music. *Gran Turismo* has licensed bands... why can't *TXR2*? This is the best driving game on the Dreamcast so far, but that's largely due to the lack of competition.

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 6 — **86**



Genki has done an incredible job with *TXR2* adressing nearly all of the issues people had with the original game. The tracks have much more variety, the control is much steadier (less feelings of floaty handling) and the visuals need to be seen to be believed. Just the car models alone are scary enough to warrant a purchase. And like in the first *TXR*, the speed these cars can reach will leave you in disbelief. But the Skyline... it's all mine!

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 6 O 6 — **92**



Wacky Races
Dreamcast
Infogrames
Racing
Reviewed page 50



Good God, when will companies stop making sub-par cart racing games? Why is it that none of them ever measure up to *Super Mario Kart* on SNES (with *Crash Team Racing* being the only one that comes close)? Although it's the first game on the (US) market to feature 'cell shading' it hardly matters: This mindless racer is mired in a sea of slowdown and rubber band AI—not to mention one of the lamest licences ever. Next...

G 7 C 7 P 4 M 4 O 5 — **63**



I really wanted to love this game. The graphics are incredible, the theme is awesome, and everything else sucks. The other racers lack real AI; while they should be racing to win, they stay in a pack and just try to make your life difficult (all seven of them). This is then worsened by the rubberband AI. Most of the weapons are worthless, and you unlock other tracks by repeatedly beating the same track. Play it, and you'll hate it.

G 9 C 6 P 3 M 7 O 7 — **71**



My first impression of this game was: "Damn, looks good!" Unfortunately, after playing said game for a day, gameplay came in and smashed that little thought. Is there anything worse than taking one bad turn and going from first to last place? If you can hang with that nugget, and get past the fact that everyone aims for you at all times, you might find a decent looking cartoon-come-to-life buried underneath that deserves a rental.

G 9 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 7 — **75**

Now, I'm not one to complain (well, not always...), but *Dinosaur* isn't a game per se, it's a tie-in. You know, buy a happy meal and instead of plastic toys, little Timmy gets this. Graphically, it's dated, and I have a hard time believing that anyone who saw the movie can make any connection between the two (save for the CG sequences). The three character switch system just doesn't work, even with the simplified objectives given.

G 4 C 6 P 4 M 5 O 5 **59**

Dinosaur is a prime example of how NOT to translate an anmimated movie into a game. I understand that Infogrames was most likely targeting a younger audience, but that doesn't excuse the fact that this game is poor! The visuals are shoddy, the control is adequate at best and your quest is painfully boring. The developers should have simply taken *Dinosaur's* profitability as a sign and jumped ship while they had the chance!

G 5 C 6 P 5 M 5 O 4 **58**

It's hard to look at this game, considering how good the movie looked. You go from quality CG to a low res PlayStation game, and the transition is jarring. Then you've got an average 3D action game, and there's not really much else you can say. Ubi's hoping to cash in on the license, and considering many people saw the movie, there should be a lot of prospective buyers out there. I'm not one of them, and you shouldn't be either.

G 4 C 6 P 5 M 6 O 6 **67**



Dinosaur
PlayStation
Ubi Soft
Action

I played the Japanese version of *IC* long ago, and it's good to see a quirky game make it to the states, but it plays more like an interactivce comic than I care to see. Most of the 'gameplay' is simple *Track and Field* button mashing, with a few rapid response elements thrown in. It's definitely a game that will give you a laugh or two (especially the Ferris Wheel stage), but the appeal lasts as long as Fury on the "All Fat Diet" (read: 2 hours max)

G 7 C 4 P 6 M 7 O 6 **75**

At first I didn't know what to make of *IC*—a game based solely on zany mini games. It almost seemed like National Lampoon's version of a video game (the way these characters always manage to run into problems). But as soon as I discovered how original and addicting the games could be, I had a whole new respect for *IC's* wacky nature. I mean what other game lets you run through busy traffic or balance for dear life on a flagpole?

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 6 O 10 **84**

This is one of those games that's fun for a) one hour or b) when you have a bunch of friends with c) lots of alcohol (now would be a good time to get that Coor's I mentioned earlier). Otherwise it's about as throw-away as it gets. While a lot of the mini-games are mildly amusing, the more you play it the less you like it—many of the 'games' feature a high frustration factor. Probably a good party game, but that's about it.

G 6 C 6 P 5 M 4 O 9 **74**



Incredible Crisis
PlayStation
Titus
Party
Reviewed page 60

I was expecting more from an SNK survival horror game. The graphics in *Koudelka* are decent (just don't compare them to the visuals in *Dino Crisis 2*) and the theme is pretty eerie but surprisingly, the battle system is turn based... not exactly what I had in mind! And after finding out that ex-Square programmers had a hand in the development, I was really left wondering where the meat was... oh I see, in the cinemas. That figures.

G 6 C 6 P 5 M 6 O 7 **56**

Hearing this game was developed by Sacnoth, comprised of ex-Square employees, I was intrigued, but right away I knew something was wrong. The graphics are horrible, the animation is lacking, everything's dark, the turn-based combat is somewhat arbitrary when it comes to whose turn it is, and the music is painful. Granted, it has nice voice acting... but *Shadow Madness* had a nice story and how many of you finished that?

G 4 C 6 P 4 M 4 O 7 **49**

While this game had a very nice pedigree in other's eyes, I was skeptical as to whether ex-*FF7* staff would be able to pull off an original game—and boy, was I right. This game is slow, tedious and not very attractive—if this game were a woman you'd have left her at the doorstep. What else have you got, Sacnoth? Oh, a bunch of pretty cinemas... from ex-Square talent... surprise, surprise, <snicker>.

G 6 C 6 P 5 M 4 O 4 **54**



Koudelka
PlayStation
Infogrames
Adventure
Reviewed page 64

Admittedly, the extent of my *Pac-Man* skills are limited to driving the Pac car in *Ridge Racer V*, but this is actually the 2nd time I've been pleasantly surprised by Namco (*Pac-Man World* was the first). As far as PS games go, it looks good, has a wide variety of enemies/obstacles to contend with and continues the lineage well. If you're ready for a quality update which actually adds good play mechanics, come back to the Pac one more time.

G 8 C 7 P 8 M 9 O 8 **83**

Pac-Man might not be Namco's hottest property, but fans of last year's *Pac-Man World* won't be disappointed with this psuedo sequel. First the graphics have been really spruced up and the gameplay feels extremly fast paced—exactly the way a Pac-Man game should play! And let's not forget those pesky ghosts, in here along with a slew of new baddies. Only the repetitiveness of the levels keeps this game from getting a higher score.

G 8 C 9 P 7 M 6 O 7 **84**

As one of the few that loved last year's *Pac Man* 3D platformer, I was chomping at the bit to get ahold of this year's 'update.' Alas, I'm gonna have to say that this isn't as good as the first. *Ms. Pac Man* isn't so much a platformer anymore as it is a revved up edition of the old arcade game. It's still cool, but doesn't feature the rabid addiction of last year's outing—and I actually miss Pac's busted victory shamble. It's still a good game, though.

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 7 **80**



Ms. Pac-Man
PlayStation
Namco
Puzzle
Reviewed page 65

VP was thought to be nothing more than an average RPG that Enix wanted to release before the massive *DQVII*, which just isn't the case. While RPGs with random battles usually send me off the deep end, *VP* succeeds thanks to high quality 2D action (with screens that go keep going and going...), deep storyline and a battle system that allows you to have more input than most and that makes for a happy Kodomo. Check it out.

G 8 C 9 P 7 M 9 O 9 **88**

Just when I was thinking *Vagrant Story* would land on US shores without any major competion, out comes Enix's amazing *Valkyrie Profile*. While I'm not often one to back an RPG, the visuals in *VP* make wasting away my days and nights all worth while. The 2D characters are a welcome sight and the frenzied combo system is perfect for a tried-and-true button-masher like me (I know Kodomo agrees). Another Enix classic!

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 7 **88**

The 2D gods live! Tri-Ace is an absolutely amazing dev team, and their take on *Act Raiser* (oh yes, it's in there) is riveting. Stunning 2D, hand drawn graphics compliment a quest of epic proportions. Enix has a sure-fire winner here. It's games like this that contribute to the PlayStation's stranglehold on the RPG market. If you love RPGs and you love 2D graphics this is one of two PS RPGs that you **must** own this year... the other being...?

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **91**



Valkyrie Profile
PlayStation
Enix
Role Playing
Reviewed page 62

For me, it's hard to get excited about a game where you play as Nazi Germany. But then I realized, I could just spend my time screwing things up by making some really poor strategic decisions. Nothing better than watching Hitler's youth crumble at the hands of the allies! Still though, the choppy animation in the battle scenes will dissapoint WWII fans. At least the game comes with a Bible-sized manual... better to read than play.

G 7 C 6 P 6 M 5 O 6 **50**

I've never fancied World War II games, and heavy strategy games are not for me. This reminds me a lot of *Front Mission Alternative*, and frankly, I'd rather play *Front Mission 3*. The graphics, sound, and gameplay here are all sub-par for a Dreamcast game. Throw in a theme that I don't care about, and it only gets worse. *Final Fantasy Tactics* tops this on every level... But then again, it does that to a lot of games as well.

G 5 C 7 P 5 M 6 O 7 **57**

While it's a shame that you can only play as one side in this edition of *ADR*, it's still a screamingly playable war sim. This game will be a big turn-off for many people because of its theme (Germany-only) and because it's a hex-based military sim. Those that are into these types of game will be in heaven, however (and any other fan of the classic *Iron Storm*). Too bad this will **never** see a US-release. How 'bout US-only next time, guys?

G 7 C 9 P 8 M 9 O 8 **88**



Advanced Daisen Ryaku
Dreamcast Import
SystemSoft
Strategy
Reviewed page 103



Jet Set Radio
Dreamcast Import
Sega
Action
Reviewed page 94

I went into *JSR* in full cynic mode and was pleasantly surprised after spending a few hours with it. The graphics are stunning, the gameplay addicting (limited tricks are annoying, however), and even the music is amazing. In fact, if it weren't for the agitating camera (good idea putting the tag and camera on the same button, <grumble>) this is potentially the best DC game yet. If anybody is listening at SOA, fix the bloody camera!!!

G 10 · C 8 · P 8 · M 10 · O 10 — **90**

AM6 has crafted one of the most enjoyable and original Dreamcast games I've played so far! While I found the less-than-forgiving training courses extremely annoying at E3, they're now much easier to plow through. Really the only thing that still bothers me about *JSR* is the camera. But after taking in the insane environments and characters, it becomes much harder to notice over time. Now to practice my GameFan tag...

G 10 · C 9 · P 9 · M 9 · O 9 — **95**

You want style, you got it! Courtesy of Sega comes an amazing looking and totally enjoyable game. While the slight pop-up and a dodgy camera do detract a little bit, *JSR* is one top notch game. Environments that come alive, inspired character design and a funky soundtrack (buy it now!), are but a few of the highlights you'll find. If Sega can fix the few problems pre-American release, it's a serious contender for game of the year.

G 10 · C 9 · P 9 · M 10 · O 10 — **96**



Logic Battle
Dreamcast Import
45
Puzzle
Reviewed page 102

When I heard this was like Battleship, I thought, "Alright, we could always play Battleship... there's nothing wrong with that, right?" Umm... nobody told me there were single square 'ships' in this game though. Doesn't that defeat the whole purpose of strategy if a piece only takes up one square of the board? That means you could have to strafe the whole board before finding it. *Logic Battle* indeed... I am baffled.

G 5 · C 6 · P 1 · M 6 · O 8 — **56**

Uhh, Battleship on the Dreamcast? Jeez, can someone please give me a developer's license, I really want to do a revamped Candyland. What gives here? First 45 drops the stellar *July* on us and now *Logic Battle*... I'd say these guys are hit and miss (Get it? Hit and miss?) but I'm still searching for their one hit. On the other hand, some gamers <ehem ECM> really enjoy quirky imports and that's exactly what *LB* is... odd!

G 5 · C 8 · P 6 · M 6 · O 7 — **71**

Novel concept but falls entirely under the "If it can be done in real life with less effort, why make it a game?" category. Seriously, who out there wants to play a simple game of Battleship on a Dreamcast, with multiple square attacks hunting for single blocks, for more than 10 minutes? I would honestly rather help Fury wash his Prelude... If really feel the urge to play this game, buy the board game Battleship and keep your cash.

G 5 · C 5 · P 4 · M 6 · O 3 — **49**



Rent-A-Hero
Dreamcast Import
Sega
Role Playing
Reviewed page 100

The venerable Mega Drive action RPG returns with a massive graphic boost.—nothing like a 112 bit power boost, eh? While the game features some super-tough Gaijin protection, those of you with a grasp of the kana should be able to piece it together. Great graphics (Who doesn't love 60 fps?) and a wacky, super-fruity Japanese theme all conspire to deliver a pretty good game... chance of a US release, Sega?

G 8 · C 8 · P 7 · M 8 · O 9 — **83**

A funny, not-as-good version of *Shen Mue* based off an obscure Mega Drive game. Unless you're fluent in Japanese, this game's unplayable without a walk-through. Even then, the humor is appealing (the Creamcast?), but the gameplay isn't really enjoyable if you don't understand what's going on. If you're going to struggle through one of these unique RPGs, play the U.S. version of *Shen Mue* later this year.

G 7 · C 6 · P 6 · M 7 · O 8 — **66**

Hmmm... now this is a strange one. *RAH* is a simple action game that feels uninspiring most of the time, and boring the rest. The superhero kick just doesn't pay what it used to, and you must take odd jobs to pay the bills (this is why Batman is a millionare...). Graphically, it's nothing special, save for the 'questionable' movements our hero indulges in. Please, Sega, leave the superhero world to those that beat up demons, not deliver ramen.

G 6 · C 7 · P 7 · M 6 · O 7 — **72**



Sakura Wars
Dreamcast Import
Sega
Dating Sim
Reviewed page 99

OK, I don't like dating sims (Kodomo is a freak for those things) but I do like strategy RPGs... a lot. Alas, the game has too much of the former and not enough of the latter. Thankfully it's significantly better than the Saturn outing and isn't just a quick and dirty port. Cleaner video, better animation, and cuter chicks (OK, now I'm a loser) make for a nice otaku game... so if your name is Kodomo (rhymes with 'sissy') help yourself.

G 7 · C 7 · P 4 · M 5 · O 8 — **71**

Hey, it's the exact same game I played on Saturn... except it looks a helluva lot better on Dreamcast. Since I didn't care too much for it back then, I care even less about it now, especially since it doesn't seem a whole lot has changed. Talk about a cheap cash run! The heavy dating sim elements don't do it for me (I much prefer the milder *Thousand Arms*), and the strategy gameplay sections don't warrant the import price tag either.

G 8 · C 7 · P 4 · M 6 · O 1 — **61**

Hmm, let's see, I passed on *Sakura Wars* when it was released back on the Saturn and now, now I'm about to do the very same with the Dreamcast version. Why? Well first, there is the daunting amount of text in this game, and second... it's a dating sim <duh>! Why on earth would I spend my time conversing with virtual females, I can't even communicate with the real thing. As a tool to learn Japanese I can see this working, but for fun? No way!

G 6 · C 8 · P 5 · M 7 · O 7 — **65**



Sorcerian
Dreamcast Import
Falcom
Role Playing
Reviewed page 101

As was the case with the domestic *Silver* this is **not** what DC RPG fans want: a sub-par remake of a not-so-hot game. Why on earth would anybody ever update *Sorcerian* when they could update *Y's*? Where's the sense in that? It's not like I'd ever want to journey with my old pal Adol ever agai. Needless to say, this is a solid pass, and for those of you that insist you'd **better** know you're a's, ka's and sa's...

G 4 · C 5 · P 4 · M 7 · O 3 — **60**

Please sir (in my best Oliver Twist impression) may I have another... PC port? While the Dreamcast is seriously lacking in RPGs, *Sorcerian* is not exactly what I was looking for to fill the void. As with *Sakura Wars*, the language barrier creates a serious issue. And the visuals... how can I possibly keep from being biased after seeing screen shots of *Grandia 2*? In all, the problem with *Sorcerian* is that it's barely ok... definitely mediocre in almost all respects.

G 5 · C 6 · P 7 · M 6 · O 6 — **60**

With high-quality RPGs coming soon (*PSO*, *Grandia II*, *Eternal Arcadia*), it's good to know that DC owners won't have to only deal with the likes of *Silver* and *Sorcerian* for too long. Sure, I can dig the old school menu and movement system, but the DC is a powerful system, not shovelware holder. Add the weak backgrounds and mediocre story, and you're left with something that does the job, but will be made obsolete very soon. I hope!

G 4 · C 4 · P 5 · M 4 · O 5 — **55**



Street Fighter III
Dreamcast Import
Capcom
Fighting
Reviewed page 98

I thought ECM was crazy when he said *Third Strike* didn't look as good as *W Impact*, but after taking a closer look, something definitely seems amiss here. Most people won't notice it, though, and you still have one of the best fighting games on any system here. However, since Chun Li is the only noticable upgrade between this and *W*, I'd recommend sticking to the domestic *SFIII*. I could care less about the new characters in this version.

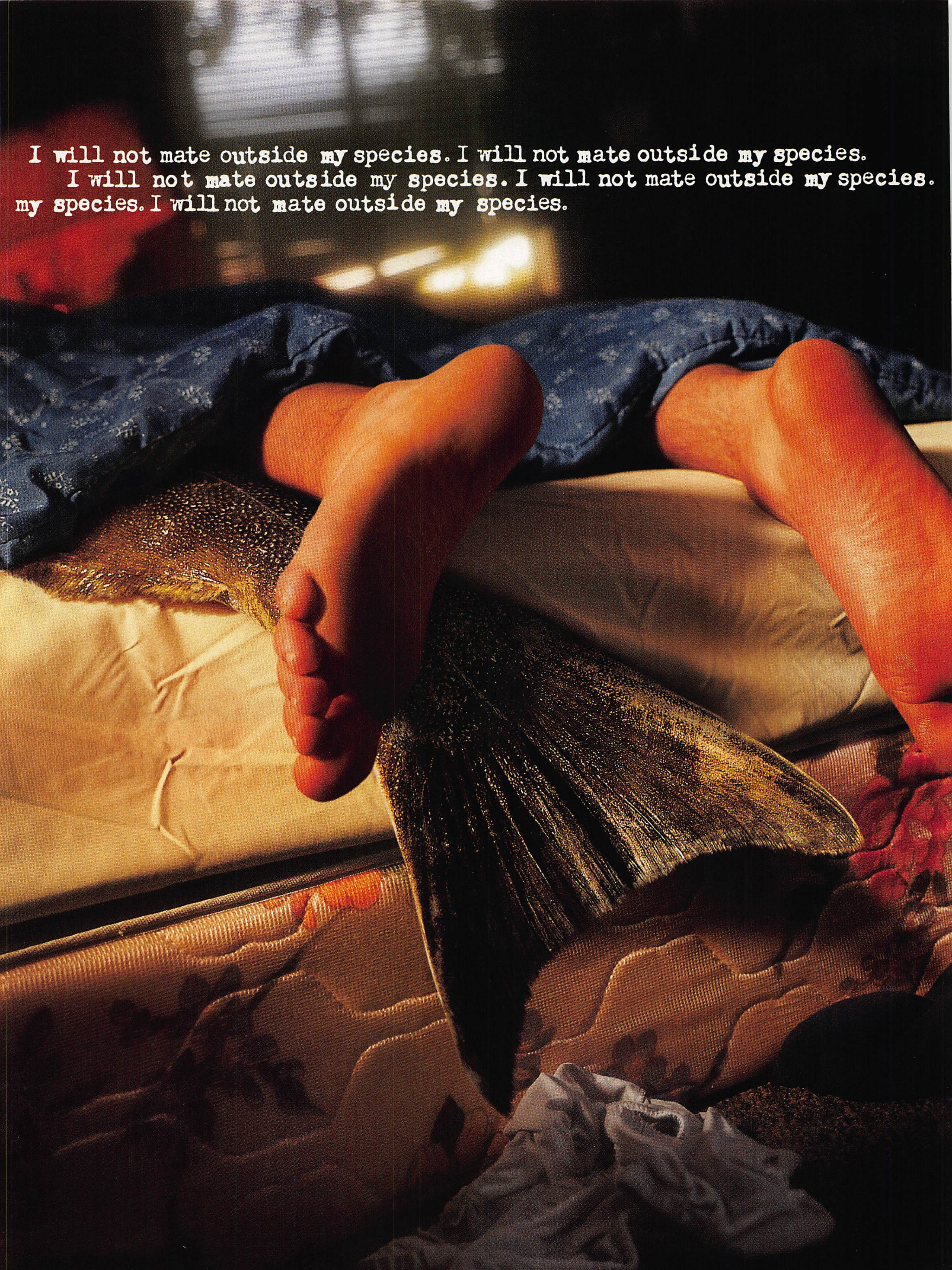
G 8 · C 8 · P 9 · M 7 · O 1 — **84**

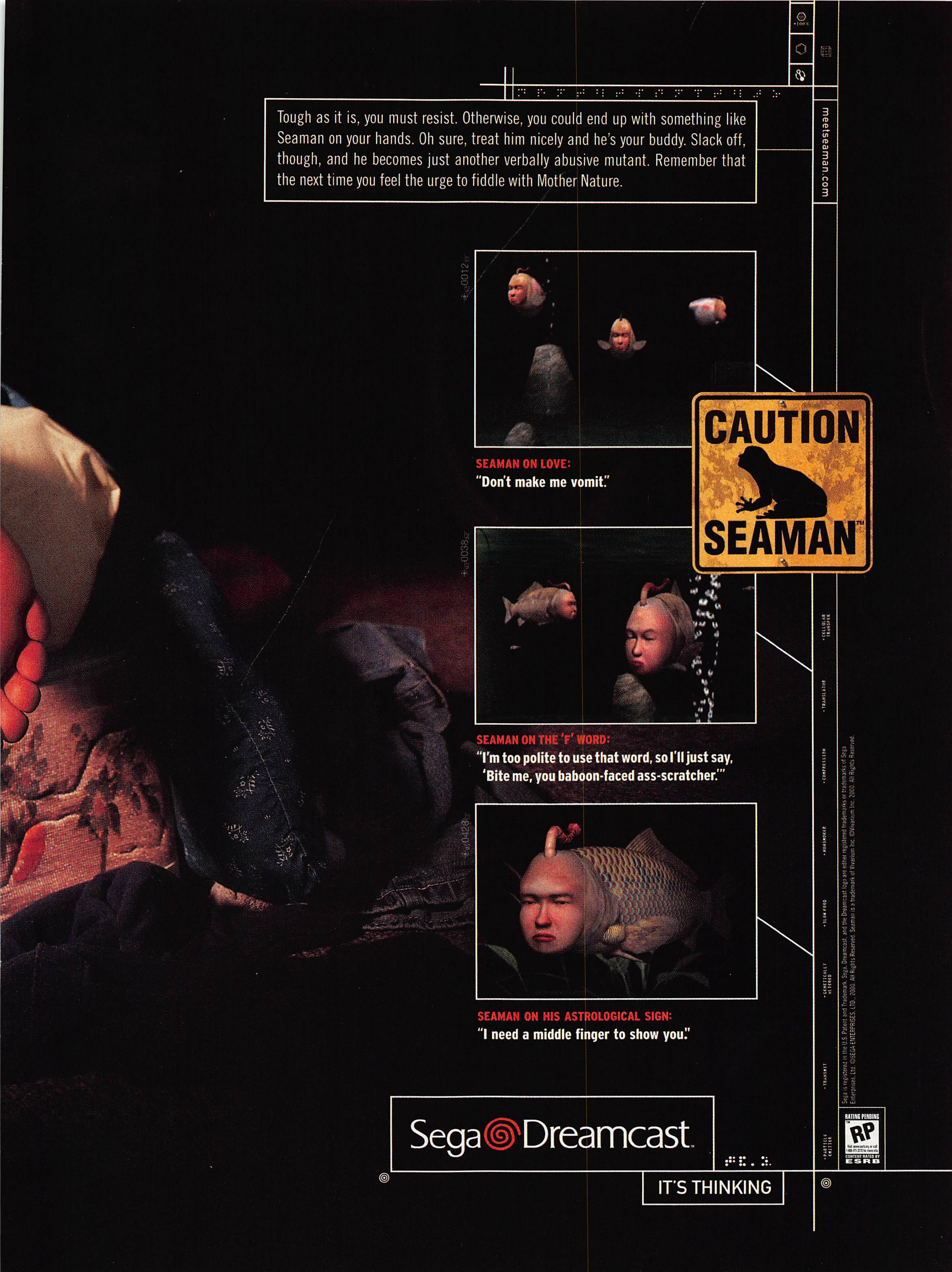
I was hesitant to pick *SF3* up considering I had just bought *WImpact* some months back. But after sitting down with the final, it's definitely time to add another *SF* game to my collection. While the character models are a bit pixelated, the amount of animation in characters like Chun Li and Remy is staggering and the endings are easily some of the best I've seen in a Capcom fighting game. But no cool character galleries? That hurts!

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 10 · O 4 — **90**

I'm not sold on Third Strike yet. Sure, there are more characters and moves (including Akuma's deadly new level 3 super), but something's missing. Had I not played *Double Impact* for hours the night before, I might not have been able to spot it. The characters just don't look up to par for *Third Strike*, which is a picky flaw, but the underlying gameplay (which allows you to modify certain elements) is still the king. Solid, but not amazing.

G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 9 — **87**


I will not mate outside my species. I will not mate outside my species.
I will not mate outside my species. I will not mate outside my species.
my species. I will not mate outside my species.

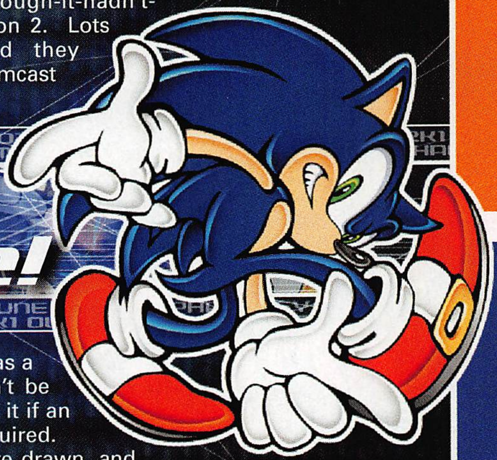

Tough as it is, you must resist. Otherwise, you could end up with something like Seaman on your hands. Oh sure, treat him nicely and he's your buddy. Slack off, though, and he becomes just another verbally abusive mutant. Remember that the next time you feel the urge to fiddle with Mother Nature.
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SEAMAN™
SEAMAN ON LOVE:
"Don't make me vomit."
SEAMAN ON THE 'F' WORD:
"I'm too polite to use that word, so I'll just say, 'Bite me, you baboon-faced ass-scratcher.'"
SEAMAN ON HIS ASTROLOGICAL SIGN:
"I need a middle finger to show you."
+PARTICLE EMITTER
+TRANSMIT
+GENETICALLY ALTERED
+SLOW FOOD
+NONSMOKER
+COMPRESSION
+TRANSLATOR
+CELLULAR TRANSFER
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SEGANET



Welcome to THE NEXT LEVEL!

Prior to the launch of the U.S. Dreamcast, there were many doubters out there. There were the Nintendo-heads indoctrinated since the NES days that swore undying loyalty (fealty, even) to Miyamoto and company, the casual gamer, a byproduct of Sony's incredible marketing machine that was only recently turned on to the world of video games, and there were all the people that were burned by Sega in the past (over the 32X, Saturn... even Sega CD to a degree)... All of these people and more were quick to write off the Dreamcast as a flash in the pan, especially after the lackluster reception it received (and is still receiving) in Japan. Personally, I wasn't leading the charge of Sega nay-sayers rolling down the hill in a PlayStation tank, but I was the furthest thing from a Sega-head in our office (minus the occasional shooter, my Saturn's the dustiest, least-played console in the living room...). So as everyone jumped and screamed as the import *Sonic Adventure* barreled its way through the office, I was the guy in the back, looking over everyone's shoulder and staying relatively quiet. I'd adopted a "wait and see" attitude toward the Dreamcast. The hardware seemed strong enough to succeed, and the quality software was present and accounted for. However, the 'X' factor was the torrent of hype swirling around the near-legendary-though-it-hadn't-come-out-yet PlayStation 2. Lots of people announced they would pass on the Dreamcast to save up for a PS2.



Opponents are Everywhere!

Two and a half million DCs sold-through later (US count), and it's pretty obvious Sega's not going to roll over and go away quietly. On the contrary, we're in the midst of a full-blown console war, and I sense a swing in momentum. The U.S. PlayStation 2 isn't out yet, but Sony's already claiming it'll blow Sega out of the water October 26th. Still, I look at the long list of PS2 launch titles, and I see nothing I feel compelled to buy. On the other hand, I bought a U.S. Dreamcast on Day One, along with *Soul Calibur*, *Sonic Adventure* and *NFL2K*. Sony claimed that the PlayStation 2 would "revolutionize gaming," but the one game that's on both consoles *(Dead or Alive 2)* is **clearly** better on Dreamcast (don't believe me? Put them together, side-by-side, and the choice is obvious!). Then there's E3: Sega shows up with an overabundant lineup of rock-solid titles (and go-go dancers), and Sony shows up with... *Metal Gear Solid 2, Madden 2001* and "The Matrix" (hey, look, I already own the top-selling PS2 title in Japan). *Metal Gear Solid 2* was the only PS2 title that truly looked "revolutionary," but it's so far from complete yet, three *Final Fantasy* games and the "Lord of the Rings" movie will have debuted before it comes out... and that's barring any production delays. *Madden 2001* looked great, but Sega's *NFL2K1* is on par visually **and** it offers online play. Suddenly, the grass is looking a whole lot greener on Sega's side of the fence...

No, I'm not the biggest Sega fan, but I'm advising people to buy a Dreamcast instead of a PlayStation 2, because, by the time Christmas rolls around, the DC will have better games. Then, throw in the added appeal of online gaming and a lower price tag, and things only get better... Speaking of online play—which is what this feature is all about—Sega feels that this will be an integral aspect of the Dreamcast's success, while Sony tacked on the announcement of a PS2 hard drive and modem almost as an afterthought at the E3 press conference. The PS2 doesn't come with a modem, so it appears that Sony doesn't consider network gaming a priority, and as a result, developers won't be anxious to program for it if an added peripheral is required.

And so, the lines are drawn, and the battle's set to begin... Sony launches the infamous PS2 October 26th of this year, and Sega plans to have SegaNet going in full force well before then. Online play is a feature that can truly "revolutionize gaming," and with the imminent arrival of SegaNet, we're in for something special. At last, console gamers will be able to play against PC gamers and prove their superiority in games like *Quake 3 Arena* or *4x4 Evolution*. Soon, I'll be able to team up with friends in New York and Tokyo as we help each other out in *Phantasy Star Online*—and finally, I'll be able to shut up that smack-talkin' Joe Kidd (who lives 500 miles away) in *NFL2K1* as Cade McNown single-handedly leads the Chicago Bears back to greatness. O.K., maybe not, but it's nice to have dreams, isn't it? As you can see, online gaming's about to hit, and the following pages show you what you have to look forward to **this year** from Sega. It's definitely got us excited... **Eggo**

SegaNet Games

Half-Life

dev: Valve · pub: Sierra

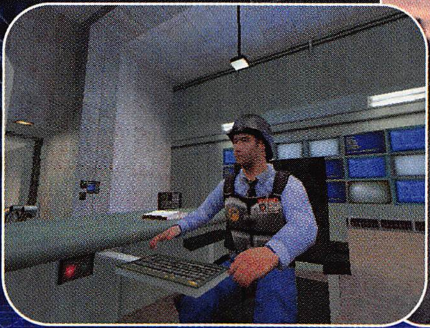


Half-Life took the PC first-person shooter genre by storm in 1999, establishing one of the most distinguished pedigrees to date. It won over fifty Game of the Year awards in '99, and sold more than 1.5 million copies worldwide. It's not too tough to see, then, why this title's got many console gamers frothing at the mouth in anticipation.

As a young research assistant at the Black Mesa Federal Research Facility, you must discover the source of a mysterious time/space rift. Horrifying monsters with advanced AI (which actually use 'scent routines' to track you in packs) scour the halls. Get out of the Facility if you can, fending off both demon and human opponents in the process. The unnerving nature of the game cannot be understated...

Thankfully, you won't have to drop a load of cash on a PC to tap into the best *Half-Life* has to offer. With increased polygon counts on characters and exclusive DC missions, this console version has power of its own. Best of all, with the full backing of the SegaNet infrastructure, deathmatch play with multiple players will be a reality this fall.

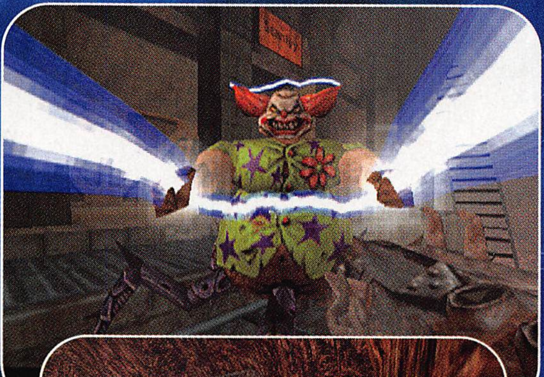






KISS Psycho Circus: The Nightmare Child

dev: Tremor · pub: G.O.D





No 'net play system would be complete without what's become the proverbial bread and butter of the system—first-person shooters. The problem is that, once you've mastered one, all that's left is another game that looks and plays almost exactly like the one you just finished. Variety's dead in the genre. Or is it?

Quite honestly, you've never seen an FPS like *KISS* before. Its demonic and horror-filled world comes alive (and dead) with hideous freaks of nature and other assorted nasties spawned by the Nightmare Child. The legions of evil are powerful, but might pale in comparison to the Elder and his mighty weapons... The player's goal is to start as a mortal and work his/her way up through the Elder's four alter egos, which correspond to the members of KISS—the Demon, the Starbearer, the Beast King and the Celestial.

Of course, deathmatch play will also be an option for those multi-player frag fests, and that's where SegaNet comes in. If you tire of the standard split-screen mode, you can venture into the network and test your mettle against even the most fervent KISS fans from around the country beginning this fall.





Unreal Tournament

dev: Epic • pub: Infogrames



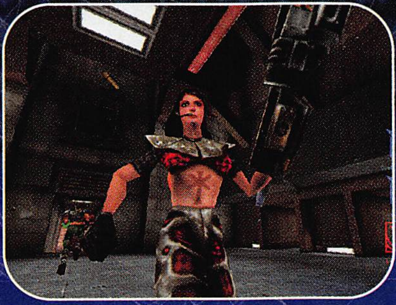
The escalating FPS war on PC has spilled over to the console. The popularity of *Unreal Tournament* on PC surprised many, and in the process, stole much of id's thunder. So now, suddenly *Quake 3* has company at the top... and the very impressive *Quake 3* DC now has to deal with *UT* again.

If you've never played *UT* on PC (poor, unfortunate lackeys), it distinguishes itself as more of a true multi-player game than a deathmatch experience. *Quake 3*'s all about pure arcade deathmatch, whereas *UT* includes other modes of play like Capture the Flag, Domination and Assault that are more suited for SegaNet. From the ground up, *UT* was designed with massive, multi-player online action in mind...

The weapon design and balance in *UT* will also make it easier for newer players to get involved. With secondary firing modes and a couple of "spam" weapons, *UT* DC gives newbies a chance to take out the experienced players. It's all about sending six rockets down a corridor (let's see you dodge those, Mr. Smart Guy).

The E3 version of *UT* chugged at an unacceptable frame-rate on the PS2, but its developers say they'll be able to raise it another twenty frames for both versions. And while the PS2 doesn't have a keyboard, which is an absolute must for FPS's (yes, it *is* a must—you're totally J.V. if you aren't using a mouse), the Dreamcast version does. The DC edition looks to deliver the same great experience as the PC version—and that's the highest compliment possible for an FPS.







Quake 3 Arena

dev: Raster • pub: Sega





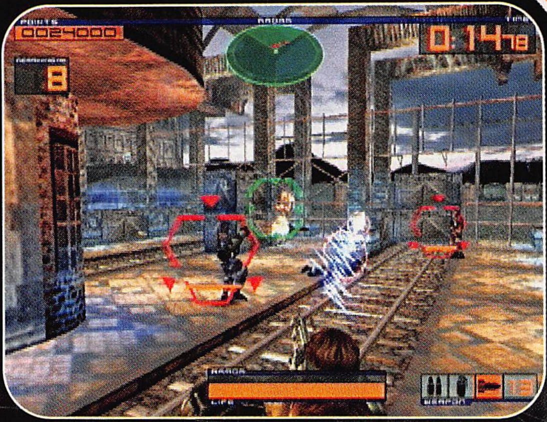
It probably doesn't matter whether you know anything about PC games at all (just ask Fury), but chances are pretty good you know about this one—hey, even Ted Kaczynski's familiar with it. id Software's *Quake* is about the most recognizable online game, and it'll certainly be SegaNet's first real "killer app" (at least for fans of first-person action games). The version we saw at this year's E3 was a blazing-fast and ultra-detailed port of the PC version, and by downloading and installing a simple software patch, PC gamers will be able to play online against Dreamcast owners without a problem. As good as the E3 build was, though, the most recent rev is even more impressive, with a better frame-rate and faster action! Of course, DC owners will want to learn how to use the mouse and keyboard—after all, PC players have had plenty of time to practice, and will no doubt wipe the floor with anyone using a standard controller. That, after all, comes from first-hand knowledge... Fury got his butt kicked at E3 trying to stay competitive with a mere pad. "But dude, the trigger was broken... I swear, bro—hey, have you seen my new rims?"

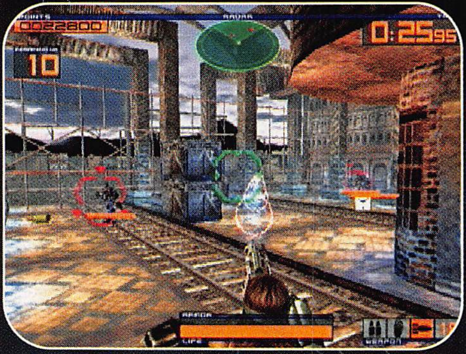




Outtrigger

dev: AM2 • pub: Sega





Just because id Software's bringing the stellar *Quake 3* to Dreamcast doesn't mean Sega (and, more specifically, AM2) will sit back and let its own FPS collect dust. Fans of *Outtrigger* in the arcade will miss the trackball (or maybe not), but regardless, this NAOMI port is (drum roll, please) a Dreamcast exclusive. Its environments, while small in size, are beautifully crafted, and showcase some truly detailed textures. Players also have the ability to change from a first-person view to a third-person perspective, which creates a sort of hybrid between *Spawn: In the Demon's Hand* and *Quake*. Of course, if you don't plan on going online (which we have to gather is a healthy thing, in the long run), the game does offer a decent split-screen mode.





SegaNet players will have quite a variety of FPS's to choose from, and though most are ports of super-popular PC games, some, like *Outtrigger,* sport enough originality and flair to help break up a bit of the monotony.

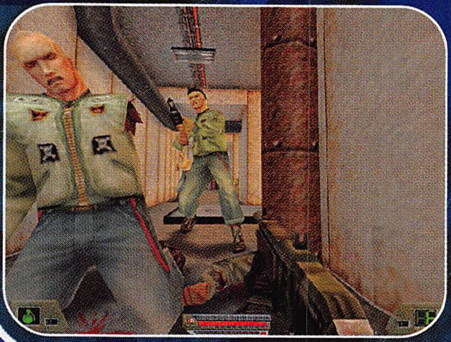
Soldier of Fortune

dev: Raven • pub: Crave



Want to spice up your generic first-person shooter? How about the ability to blow off an opponent's arm... or leg... or head? Yes, friends, if you somehow manage to tire from fragging *Quake 3* newcomers (I can just hear Kodomo snickering), you can always take a course in human anatomy with Crave's *Soldier of Fortune*. The game that was loved by many PC fans and despised by legions of parents is heading to SegaNet, and that means one thing—blood, and lots of it. Thanks to a unique rendering system, *SOF* offers twenty-six "gore zones" that give players pinpoint accuracy to make some extremely calculated kills. After all, why blast 'em in the chest if you can take their heads clear off their bodies?





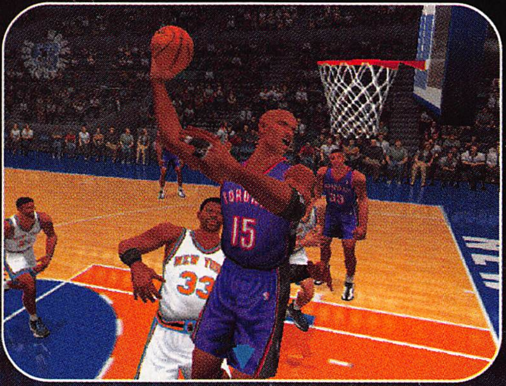




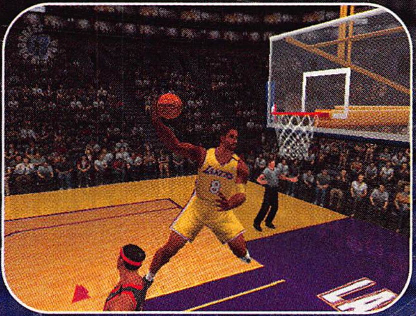

遠い約束
Evolution 2
FAR OFF PROMISE
YURKA
[rpg survival tactic #1]
Shrouded in mystery and cloaked in secrecy, a new force has divided Mag and Linear, threatening the trust between them. With no clear motive, and always one step ahead of everyone, Yurka alone possesses the immeasurable power of destruction, and the subtle power to rend Mag and Linear apart.
Remember...
only the strong survive.
Evolution 2, sequel to the best-selling RPG on the Sega Dreamcast™.
神機世界エボリューション2
TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
STING
Esp
Sega Dreamcast
Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT
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NBA 2K1 & NFL 2K1

dev: Visual Concepts • pub: Sega







The power of the Dreamcast enabled Visual Concepts to deliver the whole package last year in *NFL2K*, a brilliant, visually staggering football game that not only looked like a million bucks, but played like it as well. There were certainly some small issues with it (i.e., the kick-off bug in which you could recover almost every properly placed squib kick was one of the most glaring), but only the lamest of gamers (I repeat, the LAMEST of gamers) could knock this opus and call it nothing but eye candy... or something of that nature.

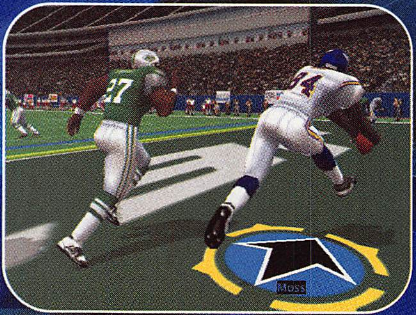
VC is a developer that listens, though, and it's spent the last ten months toiling over the sequel, addressing many of the public's concerns and complaints. As a result, expect fewer lapses in AI, more team-specific playbooks and a running game that actually works at the higher difficulty levels. You'll likewise be thrilled to find out that there'll be a franchise mode in this game, in which players can build dynasties and track rookie improvement.

To make the game as realistic as possible, VC also concentrated on the "individual battles" that take place on the field. Specific AI's been developed to handle the battles within the battles—the true gridiron war between offensive and defensive lineman and the open-field confrontations between defensive backs and wide receivers. Extensive animations have also been added to better illustrate what happens when these battles get physical.

Then, to take the game even further, VC also greatly increased the number of options available to linemen in their ongoing line-of-scrimmage confrontations. Swim, roll, slam up your forearm into a guy's mask...do whatever it takes to get around that defender and at the QB.

The only other addition of real note is the inclusion of a Franchise Mode. Like the EA titles, *NFL2K1* players will be able to play through a team's entire existence, developing rookies, replacing vets and bettering squads in the quest to create a dynasty.

NBA2K, more flawed than *NFL2K* but none the less impressive in its own right, made the sport of basketball more in-your-face and graceful than any game before it. Great graphics, solid game-play and small innovations like a free throw system made it a great hoops sim—once you got past some of its more annoying faults (oh, the non-icon passing)... Better AI, a franchise mode and the implementation of special moves make this a top-notch sophomore opus. I can already tell you that I have issues with some of the game's button/action allocation (icon passing would be the one I'm most distressed about), but VC says it's working on making it the best it can be. With the inclusion of new specials that require their own buttons, the DC pad's becoming a major pain in the butt for the developer...

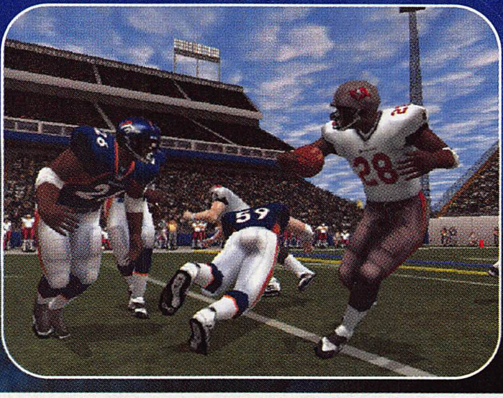


Of course, players could pull off these special moves in the original game *(NBA2K)*, but they didn't really do anything; the crossover dribble and spin move never really worked, and the absolutes of collision detection meant that even glancing at the defender neutralized the maneuver. A new type of code's been written, though—VC's calling it the "slippery" code. This means that, when spinning on a defender or trying to fly by him on a crossover, you can slide right off him if you only catch a piece of his body... just like in the real game. Now, using these moves will give you that ever-important first step that can make or break a play.

Both of these titles will offer the same options to gamers online. Currently Visual Concepts is concentrating on making sure they get the online play done right and adding more than the bare bones of options and modes. Dealing with issues like lag and disconnection are a much bigger concern. For those problems, VC is making sure that players have the options of pausing a game in progress while booted players rejoin.

For those that care less about the ability to get online and participate in head-to-head contests (of up to 8 players, I might add) and more about the game's ability to grow and offer replay value, there are roster downloads available. That's right—as the real seasons wear on and players (especially rookies) either catch fire or lose their stuff, you can now download updated stats, essentially rejuvenating your game. It's unclear whether Sega would support downloadable rosters through multiple years so that players could stay with one copy of the series, but imagine that you could buy a game once and then use downloaded rosters to change the teams every year... it'll be interesting to see how that turns out.





Yet to be implemented, though, are stat tracking ladders on the server. After Visual Concepts finishes the games, it plans to start thinking about setting up ranking ladders to showcase the best players in the land. No plans are in the works for online franchises to be run with multiple participants.

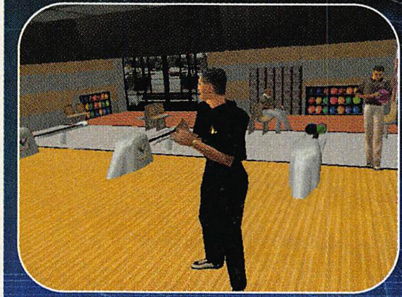

遠い約束
Evolution 2
FAR OFF PROMISE
LINEAR
[rpg survival tactic #2]
Unexpectedly put between two people she trusts, Linear must decide to travel with her old friend, or to adventure with a new one. Lacking faith and stifled with indecision, Linear is forced to choose between Mag or Yurka. Stuck in the middle of two warring rivals, Linear must choose which friendship is worth saving.
Remember...
only the strong survive.
Evolution 2, sequel to the best-selling RPG on the Sega Dreamcast™.
神機世界エヴォリューション2
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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PBA Tour Bowling 2001

dev: Bethesda
pub: Bethesda

Bethesda Softworks, a company known for its PC titles, is putting together an online bowling title. Now, wipe that smirk off your face... Bowling games like *Brunswick Pro Bowling* are quite fun to play, and we look forward to seeing a bowling title on the Dreamcast. Bethesda's setting up its own proprietary server for the game, and will allow players to jump in and challenge other players in such multi-player contests as team play, tournaments and friendly matches.





The game differs little from bowling titles of the past. It'll give players several modes of play, the ability to make their own custom bowlers and adjust bowling physics. *PBA Tour Bowling 2001* will take the realism of bowling even further, though, with more contact points, a better physics engine and even the minute details, such as lane degradation from balls scuffing and pulling up the oil!

Railroad Tycoon II

dev: Tremor
pub: G.O.D

The delicate balance required to master a real-time strategy game isn't lost on me... After spending weeks on *C & C: Tiberian Sun* for the PC and several more on my latest PlayStation "X-Com" kick (yes, that old thing), I'm looking for something new to keep my streak of insomnia alive. The trouble is that Tremor Entertainment's Dreamcast conversion of the formerly PC-exclusive *Railroad Tycoon II* might just be too much of a good thing.

After taking control of a burgeoning railroad station in 1804, you must keep a wary eye on multiple areas of management to bring your company to modern times and beyond. Goal-based missions are the norm, such as linking two cities together, and the game's definitely benefited from an improved 3D engine.





Best of all, you'll be able to play against other gamers via SegaNet, thereby avoiding the worst crime in gamedom (i.e., the split-screen RTS). By the time this mag's in your hot little hands, *Railroad Tycoon II* should be on store shelves, just waiting for Sega to implement the servers and let the action begin...



遠い約束
Evolution 2
FAR OFF PROMISE™



MAG

[rpg survival tactic #3]

Mag is back to continue his quest to be the world's greatest adventurer. With Yurka's arrival, however, Mag must now choose between fulfilling his lifelong dream or to save his best friend, Linear. At the epicenter of the conflict stands Yurka often flaunting his amazing powers of destruction. With Linear's fate in his hands, Mag must rise up for the greatest challenge of his life.

Remember...
only the strong survive.

Evolution 2, sequel to the best-selling RPG on the Sega Dreamcast™.

神機世界エヴォリューション2

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

STING Esp Sega Dreamcast Ubi Soft ENTERTAINMENT®

www.ubisoft.com

Phantasy Star Online

dev: Sega · pub: Sega

What do you get when you combine the brilliant mind of Yuji Naka with the proven talents of Sega's renowned Sonic Team and the long awaited return of one of Sega's hottest RPG properties ever? Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to **THE** online gaming event of the new millennium: *Phantasy Star Online.* Yup, if you weren't lucky enough to see this baby in action at this year's E3, you missed out on one of the coolest games the GameFan staff's ever laid eyes on... Indeed, any showgoer that took notice of the four hi-res monitors displaying Yuji's handiwork were instantly floored by the sheer scope of what Sonic Team is attempting to create. We're talking breathtaking real-time battles with enormous alien beats, hundreds of off-world planets to explore, an unbelievable visual design and, of course, full interaction with your entire party via *PSO*'s universal language system. Unfortunately, however, Sega's being extremely tight-lipped with info and screens on this ultimate action/RPG, so enjoy these few shots for now. We promise, this wasn't at all meant to tease you <snicker, snicker>...



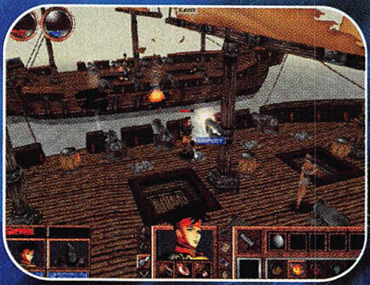






Legend of the Blade Masters

dev: Ripcord · pub: Ripcord



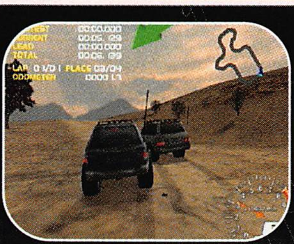


If there's one genre Sega badly needs to beef up, it's definitely RPGs. First-party titles *Shenmue, Phantasy Star Online* and *Eternal Arcadia* (now dubbed *Skies of Arcadia*) are still far off from release, so right now appears to be a perfect opportunity for third-party developers to flood the DC's meager RPG market. Enter *Legend Of the Blade Masters...*

This action/RPG, crafted by Ronin Entertainment, will give gamers a bit more substance than the hack-and-slash gameplay found in Crave's *Draconus.* Players take command of Erik Valdemar, a grief-stricken teenager whose parents were killed two years earlier when rampaging beasts struck his peaceful village of Alvante. One day, while out on a harmless stroll, Erik comes across a sacred blade with a mysterious past linked to the devastation of his ill-fated village, and the adventure begins... *LOTBM* will feature seven of these mystical swords in all (hidden throughout the game), and it's up to your party to locate and master them. And, like *Phantasy Star Online, LOTBM* will provide a multi-player experience that supports up to five players simultaneously.








4X4 Evolution

dev: Terminal Reality • pub: G.O.D.

O.K., the words "racing game" probably don't inspire thoughts of sport/utility vehicles, and—barring a select few thirty-something mothers on their way to a Starbucks—probably don't conjure up images of driving madness. Well, all that's about to change with the release of *4X4 Evolution,* which will thrust the oversized, gas guzzling beasts into the limelight.

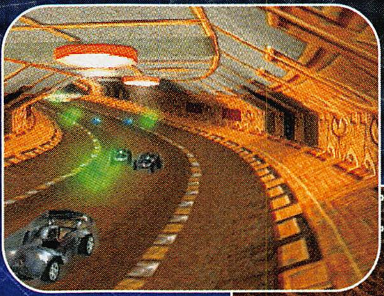


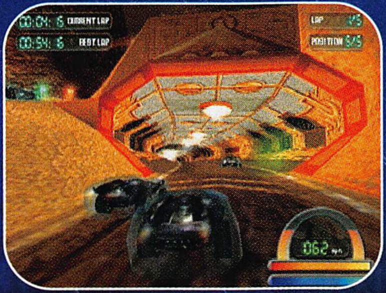

After choosing from a lengthy list of SUVs (including Lexuses (Lexi?), Toyotas and Nissans, among others), players enter a series of off-road races on any one of sixteen tracks. Each course will sport multiple checkpoints that you must pass through sequentially, but there's nothing that says you have to stay on the road to race between them... If you see a path that might yield a shortcut, whether over a mountain or a ramp, why not take it as far as you can and cut down your time?

Tests of the early version with Eggo yielded promising results, including a healthy frame-rate and a solid physics engine. Couple that with the ability to upload times and race against as many as three human opponents via SegaNet, and you've got a game that just might make me a believer in the SUV rage.

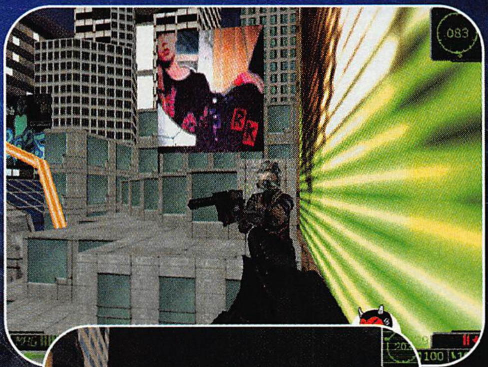
Pod II

dev: Ubi Soft
pub: Ubi Soft





What, no network-ready *Rayman*?! O.K., the jointless wonder might not be the ideal vehicle for online play, but leave it to Ubi Soft to back SegaNet with a slew of other killer titles, including *Peacemaker* and *Pod II*. Hmm, *POD II*, eh? Sounds familiar... could this be an update to Ubi's post-apocalyptic PC racer? Oh, yeah, let's hear it for the PC ports!! For those that aren't familiar with *POD*, however, imagine Midway's *Rush 2049* dropped smack in the middle of a barren wasteland in which huge, mutated insects (à la "Starship Troopers") reign supreme. Of course, if you think the only competition will be from a bunch of oversized creepy crawlers, think again... Like *Wipeout*, *Pod II* racers must battle one another with the latest in high-tech weaponry. If only the *POD* team can bring this futuristic racer in at a rock-solid frame-rate, Ubi Soft might just wind up with a winning combination of speed and carnage for DC owners this fall...





M.O.U.T.

dev: Ripcord
pub: Ripcord

Some gamers might feel that, as potential PS2 owners get Solid Snake's highly anticipated return all to themselves, Sega loyalists could be left out of the whole covert operations department. Well, thanks to Ripcord Games and Zombie (the fine makers of *Spec Ops* on PC... what, never heard of it, either?), Dreamcast-heads will soon be up to their necks in gun-powder and anti-terrorist missions when *M.O.U.T. 2025* debuts this November.

In this title, set in the near future, players assume the role of a M.O.U.T. (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) agent intent on preventing the diabolical acts of our nation's largest threat (and no, I'm not speaking about Nambla)—the New Communist Bloc. The NCB's already devastated most of America with a series of ruthless nuclear strikes, and has left only portions of the western United States and Alaska intact. Over 220 million people die within six hours.

M.O.U.T. 2025 will feature a captivating story line, an array of deadly weapons and both nighttime and daytime operations, and should give SegaNet players a bit more meat for their standard first-person shooter.

Black & White

dev: Lionhead · pub: Sega



Peter Molyneux (creator of such games as *Populous*, *Theme Park* and *Magic Carpet*) is back, and he's going to give Dreamcast owners the power to play God! This long-awaited PC game by Lionhead Studios puts players in the role of a powerful sorcerer with his own remote part of the world to command. Unfortunately, he's not the only powerful being looking to expand his control and increase his power... There'll be other sorcerers battling for supremacy, as well, so you must gain the support of the inhabitants of your land to build your strength, summon giant beasts to rain havoc and attempt to overthrow all those that stand in the way. And if you're playing on SegaNet, you'll have a whole lot of opposing magic users to compete against! We don't know if PC users will be able to play against Dreamcast owners yet, but either way, this mysterious battle for world domination will certainly scorch the phone lines!



Gorka Morka

dev: Ripcord · pub: Ripcord



The popular *Warhammer 40,000* universe comes to life with the release of Ripcord Games' *Gorka Morka,* which features a distinct mix of combat-style RPG elements and racing action. Players must choose from a plethora of Ork "Mobz," arm their vehicles and beat or eliminate the competition.

The concept behind the game is simple: Recruit and assemble an Ork Mob, and acquire parts (by any means necessary) to fine-tune the battle vehicles. The game's engine is based on the popular *Jeff Gordon's Racing* engine, so almost all aspects of the cars are customizable, and they might just fall off when they take damage from other drivers... And when you finally do get your vehicle in motion, you can switch between driver and gunner on the fly to add yet another touch of innovation.



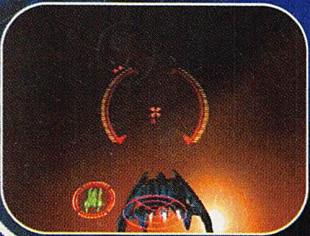


The icing on the cake will definitely be the ability to link eight gamers and battle it out via SegaNet. With a mixture of innovative gameplay and combat driving madness, things might just get very interesting come September...

Starlancer

dev: Warthog · pub: Crave

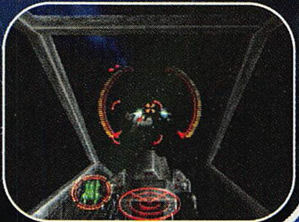


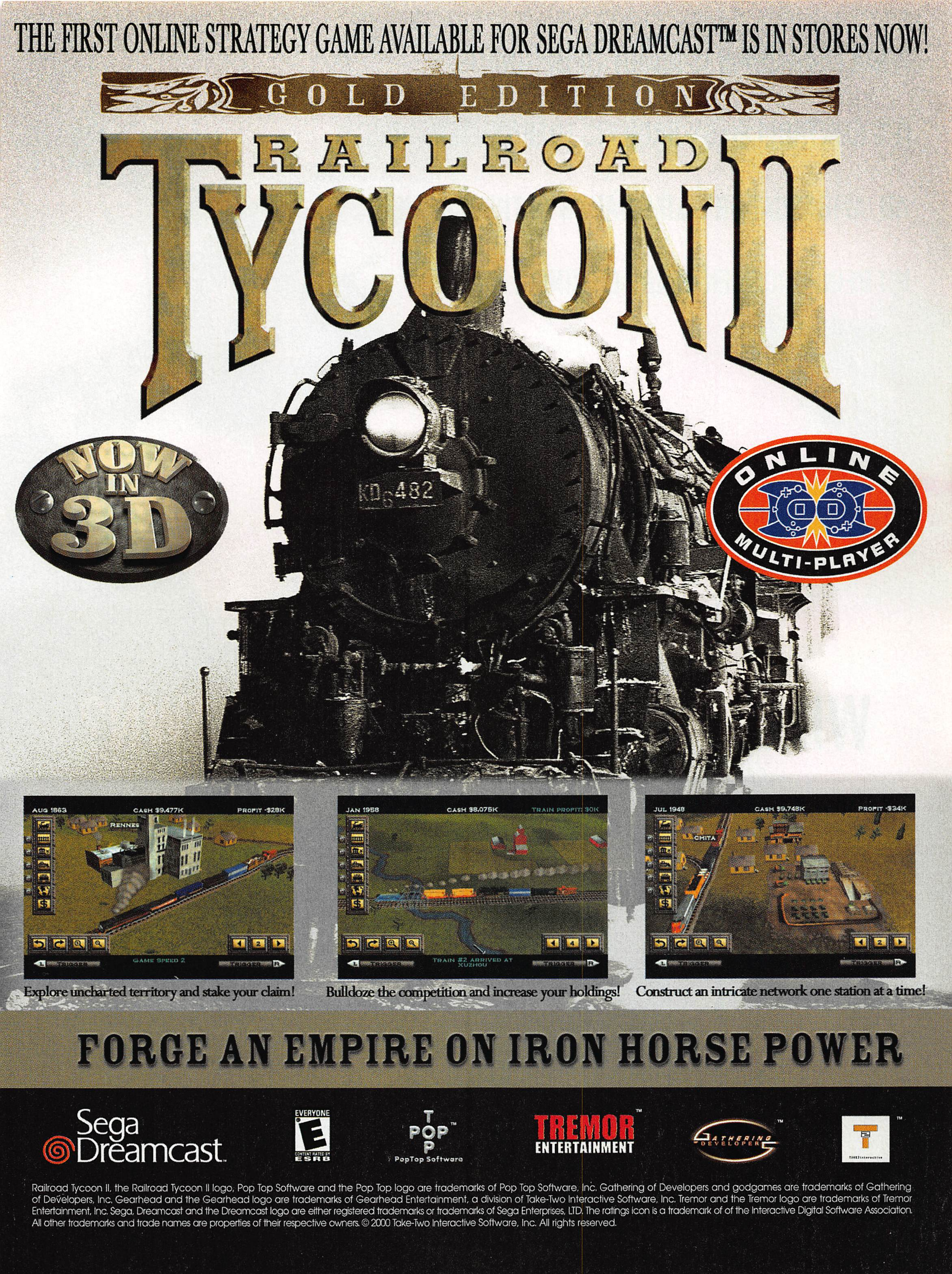




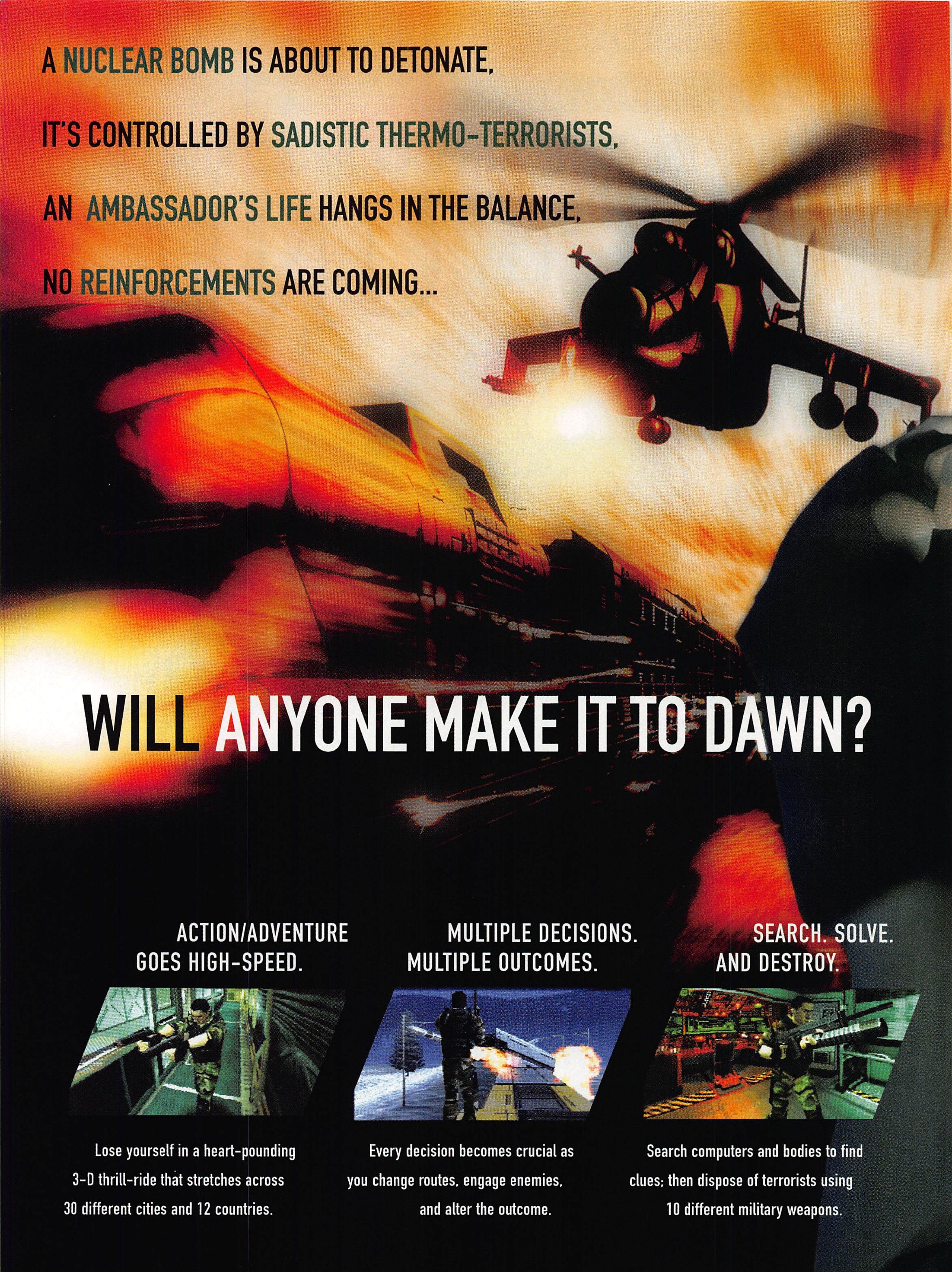


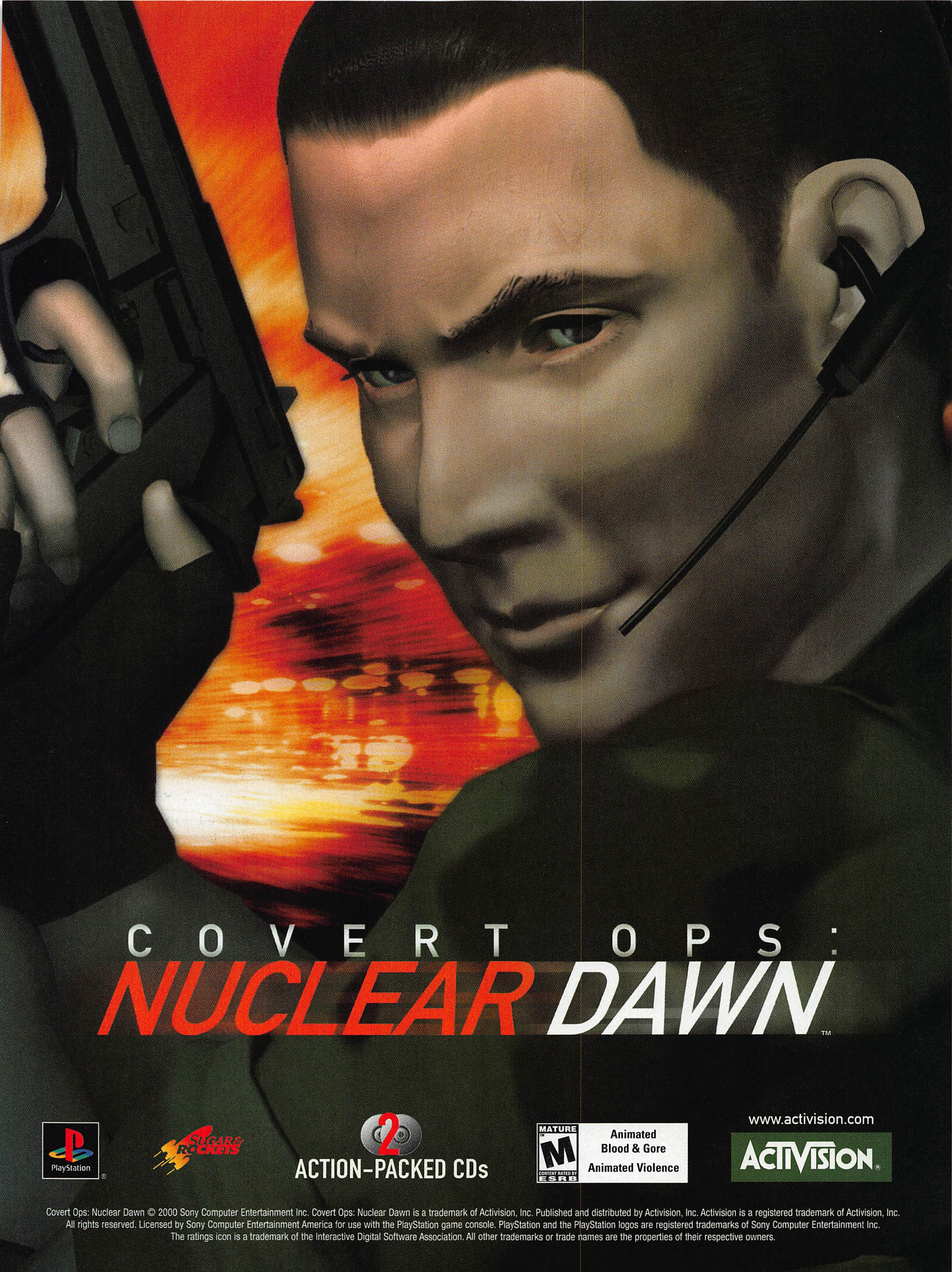
Talk about covering all genres... Crave's literally gone from the medieval land of *Draconus* to the fruit-filled world of *Super Magnetic Neo,* taken a brief spin down *Tokyo Extreme Racer*'s endless highways, and now, what would you think about engaging in a bit of intergalactic space combat in Crave's first SegaNet release, *Starlancer*? The team that brought us *Wing Commander* (the game, NOT the movie... what, you think they're savages?) developed the title, which appears to be quite similar to *Colony Wars*, *Armada* and *Star Trek Invasion*. And if you've ever sat down with any of those games, you know *Starlancer*'s focus will definitely center on heated deep-space dogfights... That's right, you'd better break out your "Last Starfighter" DVD (and forward it to the "Death Blossom" sequence), because once this game hits SegaNet, the competition's certain to get ridiculously fierce. Let's just hope Crave employs that patented Psygnosis lens flare technique to make this one a SegaNet classic!





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A NUCLEAR BOMB IS ABOUT TO DETONATE,
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AN AMBASSADOR'S LIFE HANGS IN THE BALANCE,
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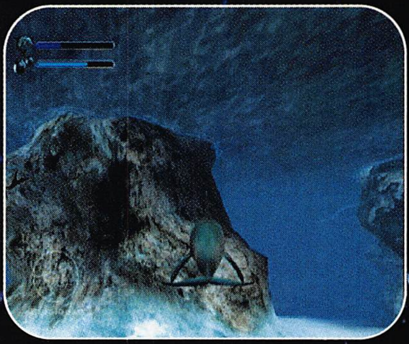


"Refreshingly different" are the first words that come to mind when playing *Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future* for the first time... Hungarian developer Appaloosa Interactive spent much of the 32-bit era creating offbeat and ill-received titles, but it's lifted itself from the murky depths of hell (i.e., *Contra)* to far clearer waters with the much-anticipated 128-bit *Ecco* debut, and all without the involvement of the mammal's creator, Ed Anunziata.

Two of Sega Europe's smarter moves were to fund this project and to get Appaloosa to work on it (the development team contains many of the members that worked on the original games). It also secured a well-known sci-fi author to hammer out the plot and veteran musician Tim Follin to create the score—which, sadly, doesn't quite match the game's superb programming or artwork.

Sci-fi author David Brin tells a tale of a peaceful coexistence between dolphins and humans, a peaceful symbiosis that's interrupted by a mysterious force known as The Foe that shatters the crystals protecting the Earth. The real-time introduction oozes style, and is narrated by Tom Baker, better known (by the British, at least) as Dr. Who.

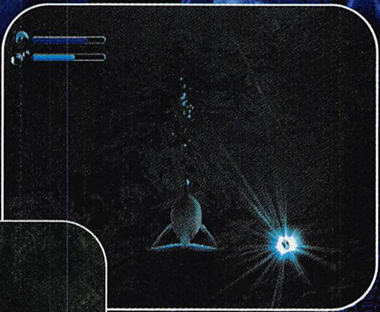
Things get off to a fine start as Ecco appears on-screen in the first level, which is an intelligently designed bay area that allows to the player to come to terms with the slightly tricky controls and soak in the lush, captivating graphics... Various dolphins swim around the levels, and Ecco can attract

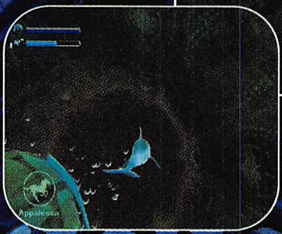


them and interact with them with just a blast from the good old sonar. Traditionally, a short conversation then follows, and the other dolphins give Ecco (or, rather, the player) advice on how to execute certain moves. Certain dolphins and other sea creatures also have small puzzles for Ecco to complete. Some of these are unnecessary to complete the game, but success is often rewarded with energy crystals that do come in handy. Upon meeting smarter dolphins, Ecco learns new sonar songs that allow him to call on a school of fish to surround and defend him. When in trouble, gamers can find a pair of piranhas to form a protective ring around Ecco, or some luminescent fish to show him the way through dark caves.

You'll spend several moments just marveling at the stunning detail that's gone into the underwater landscapes. Simply swimming around and making huge jumps out of the water is great fun. Soon, however, the urge to explore what the rest of the game has to offer takes over, and after a few simple puzzles are solved, it's on to the next level, where the game takes a dive toward murkier waters.

Each level holds shards of the main crystal





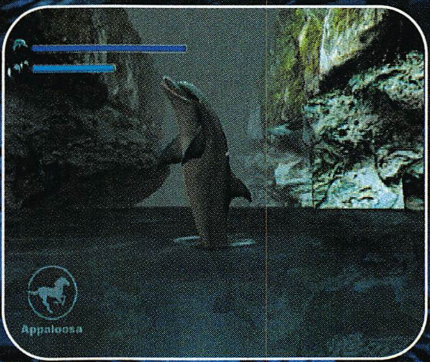
ecco THE DOLPHIN
DEFENDER OF THE FUTURE

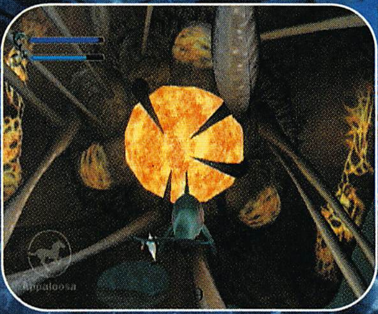
Dreamcast

EXCLUSIVE 6TH MAN: Better off "Ed"?	Developer - Appaloosa Publisher - Sega	1 Player Available Now Europe/Aug US	Viewpoint Score :85

that deliver cryptic messages—or, more specifically, hints on what exactly is required to complete the level. To say that the hints are vague, though is too generous. Some of them are just plain strange, and leave the player (who's almost clueless) drifting around massive areas with little idea of what to do. New skills can be acquired, like the ability to swim against strong currents and the capacity to use sonar to guide other creatures, but exactly what you're supposed to do with your new-found powers or their purposes are not immediately apparent. The nature of the game makes it interesting for all kinds of gamers out there, but the steep difficulty level and problematic puzzles make it hard for the younger audience to get into.

Additionally, the areas are extremely large, and easy to get lost in. A proper map would've been crucial, but sadly, the map provided by Ecco's sonar is next to useless. Couple this with the limited draw distance of the darker waters, and learning the levels inside and out becomes nearly mandatory. There are thirty-four different levels in all, and four completely different areas that each sport a unique look... Appaloosa pays homage to its 16-bit efforts with some beautiful 2D levels that manage to play very much like the original, but feature some spectacular textures and look just as spectacular as the 3D sections.





The game's graphics are powered by Appaloosa's Diesel Power™ engine that runs some of the best-looking visuals the Dreamcast has yet seen, and the frame rate rarely drops. The camera system, however, has trouble working in tight caves, where strong currents can suddenly derail Ecco from his path, and while the camera spins around helplessly, Ecco can easily (and annoyingly) become stuck in the game's backgrounds.

Still, credit should be given to Appaloosa's talented animators for all of the sea life it's created, with stunningly realistic animation that must be seen to be believed. The second camera angle's designed to give players a chance to view Ecco from all angles, and the cute dolphin's sure to convert many onlookers to have a go at the game.

As usual, combat occurs when Ecco rams his opponents, most of which are nasty-looking sharks... The game's six degrees of freedom make the combat a lot more confusing than it was back in the 2D days, but as soon as players learn its controls and special moves, dispatching enemies becomes second nature.



Despite its design flaws, the majority of the game flows beautifully. The events of the game work superbly within its environments, and its flow is not interrupted by unnatural events—that is, if you can work out the puzzles. New skills are introduced to Ecco with expert timing, thanks to the designers that help keep the gameplay varied and, most importantly, fun.

Obviously, this has been a work of passion and love for Appaloosa, and for the most part, Ecco returns in triumphant style. Transforming such a classic 2D game to the age of real-time 3D visuals hasn't been easy, but the developer's been able to pull it off with aplomb and offer a genuinely refreshing experience that's marred only by a distinct lack of direction—something that Ed Anunziata might've been able to contribute. Those gamers that stick with it will find a superbly atmospheric game that'll last them a long time.

The 6th Man would like to note that, like Red Dog, *this review is based on the European final, and if there's any major differences between it and the imminent US release he'll be sure to re-review it... but again, he doubts it.*



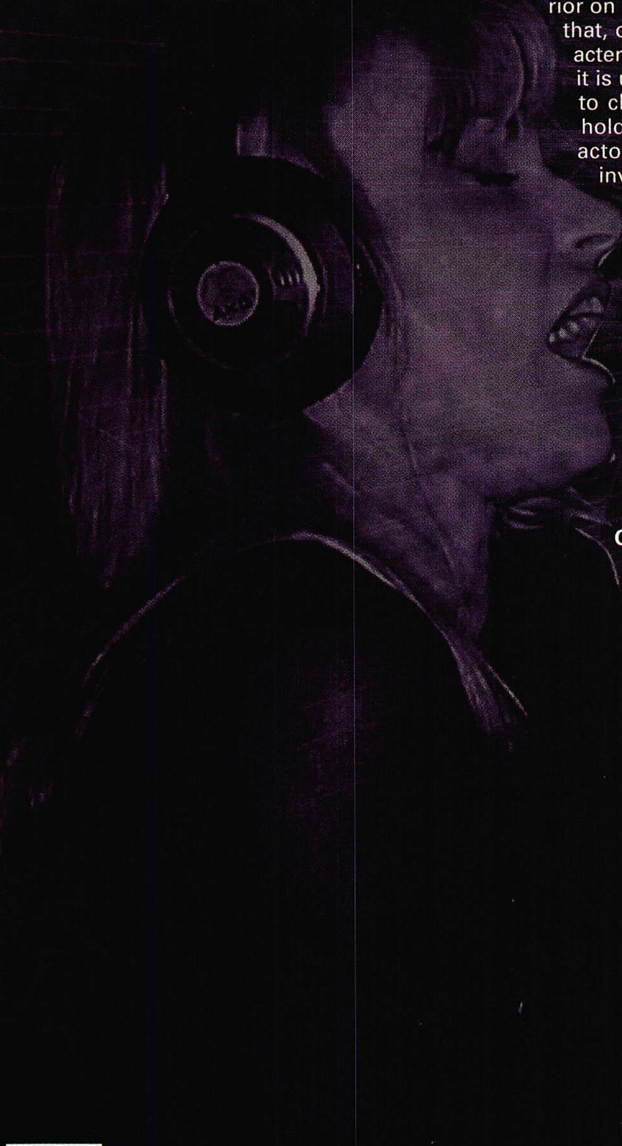



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Simulator
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G-SHOCK
MR. ZOGS
SEX WAX
ARROW
T & C Surf Designs
Hawaii
Local Motion

GameFan would now like to introduce Lani Minella, the most famous voice actress you've (n)ever heard (of)...

Her list of credits is long and distinguished—it wouldn't even fit this page. Just trust us, she's worked on many games for various consoles (*Sonic Adventure*, *Snowboard Kids*, *Die Hard Trilogy*) and the PC (*Unreal Tournament*, *EverQuest* and *StarCraft*), as well as film, television, theater and radio productions. Her talents extend beyond mere voice acting, though. She's an excellent director of other voice actors, as well (a role that, in the industry, may be even more important). Yet chances are you've never heard of her, because voice actors/actresses never get any credit... just the blame. Now, before you flip the page disinterestedly, I encourage you to continue reading. Lani is quite a character, and when we sat down with her shortly after E3, the interview turned out quite well. So the next time you come across a game with some bad voice acting, remember that it could be the fault of a director, writer or publisher that's more interested in rushing the product out the door than in producing quality...



GameFan: Video game reviewers often bash American voice acting, whereas Japanese voice acting is held in the highest regard. How do you feel about this? Is American voice acting getting a bad rap, or is the pool of domestic quality talent just not 'there yet?'

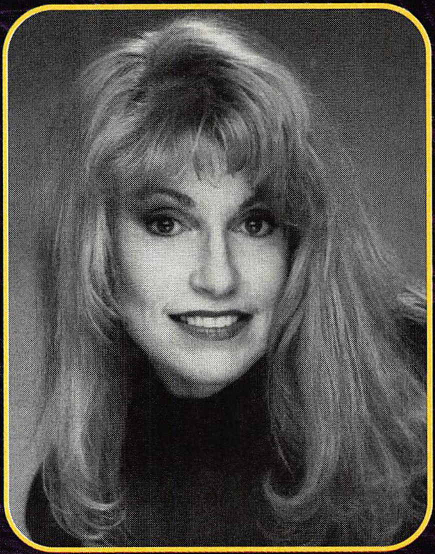
Lani Minella: Perhaps Japanese voice acting fits the anime or Japanese style of cinematics better, but when you try and dub English over pre-rendered Japanese cutscenes, it's worse than a bad Jackie Chan movie, and the Chan flicks don't take themselves so seriously. I don't wish to offend anyone, but so many scripts I have to work with are written lacking personality, humor, wit, words for the spoken (as opposed to written) word, etc. Even with ad-libs, there's little hope for intrigue. Having heard many Japanese actors, I'd say they sound far more similar to each other than many of the variables you get with American actors. The anime girls sound like twittering chipmunks, and the guys sound like the late John Belushi's version of a kamikaze warrior on "Saturday Night Live." Either that, or the voices don't fit the character in many of the games. Since it is usually the job of the producer to choose what voices they want, hold off your criticism of voice actors until you know what's involved from start to finish.

GF: What games do you play for fun?

LM: I like games with surprises, action, humor, good music, art and gameplay. If I named my faves, I'd lose bonus points, but the less motion sick I get, the better. As I said (as *StarCraft*'s dropship pilot), "If you're gonna hurl chunks, use the vomit bag in front of you."

GF: Do producers allow you to ad lib or change lines in the recording studio?

LM: I'd say yes, as a general rule, if the writer is not present. Egos are the enemy whenever creative people merge... If scripts came to me beforehand, I'd have a better opportunity to possibly spice them up a bit. Here again, we enter that zone of the marketing monsters. If you stray too far, the game won't be sold in Wal-Mart, and there go the big bucks. Consequently, we steer away from extra helpings of blood and guts, smart-ass taunts or anything that's not politically correct. How come



South Park can get away with it?

If you look at the difference between the scripts for *Duke Nukem* between consoles and the PC, you go from 'Romper Room' to 'Sin City.' The best ad-libbing is done for attacks, being attacked, pain, dying and killing expletives. I am the queen of those, and I feel I can also direct others to do the most creative "arghs," "oooghs," "eyaahs," screams and hits. I've been called "scary," I'm so convincing. You need to be creative when dying from a slit throat versus hot lava, a crushing machine, flesh-eating beetles or falling into an abyss. Compared to PC games, console games are not as grotesque in their offerings of maiming and suffering.

GF: What characters have you had the most fun doing the voice for, or had the hardest time coming up with a voice for?

LM: I love characters with pizzazz, sass, senility, wickedness or humor. I also like a challenge—being a male, a monster, a different ethnicity, an alien, a wizard or warrior, etc. Impersonating famous people is a blast, too. Some examples: demons (*Diablo 2*, *Mummy*, *Astal* and *Revenant*), a Zerg queen and dropship pilot (*StarCraft*), Nettie (*Shadowman*), famous Klingons, Vulcans and Romulans, Stephen Hawking's computer, Sigourney Weaver (*Alien Resurrection*), Linda Fiorentino (*Men In Black*), all the "Land Before Time" dinosaurs, Casper, the Bullwinkle gang, and a lot more. The hardest characters were when I did this kids' game called *Lost & Found*, where I had to be the voices of hundreds of inanimate things like a refrigerator magnet or talking numbers. That's like trying to make an encyclopedia read like a Monty Python movie.

GF: Who has been the easiest producer to work with? The hardest?

LM: Easiest: The ones who are organized, open-minded and allow people like myself to do the task at hand. They have the ability to communicate their ideas without



going through the "rule by committee" process. If they're controlled by their mother company in Japan, they may not be able to make a decision that works for an American audience.

GF: Have you had any formal training in voice acting, or did you just grow up constantly creating new voices?
LM: I was always good at imitating things right away, and before I knew it, I was asked to do morning drive radio. I'd have to be the guest star every day (whoever was in the news or the gossip column). It's kind of cool how that led from Marge Simpson or Lady Di into *Unreal*, *EverQuest* and *Sonic Shuffle*.





GF: Do people ever blame you for something a character of yours did in a game?
LM: Whatever comes out of us actors' mouths is blamed on us. Heck, I got blamed for being Wirt, the peg leg boy in *Diablo,* because I sold everybody useless stuff. The witch was accepted as being okay ("I sense a soul in search of answers"), even though I thought she sounded too much like Katharine Hepburn. More commonly, we actors get blamed for a lousy script or even for a cruddy game.

GF: What's the funniest thing that's ever happened to you in the recording studio?
LM: Sometimes, my gestures get carried away, and I've walloped the mic or whacked the water glass across the room. I often go through the motions when directing, too. The guy might be there, standing calmly in front of the mic while I'm running around kicking and punching and pretending to shove mountains, be crushed or flail about in flames. I get all worked up and sweaty just to get a grunt out of a guy.

The really funny stuff is some of the script lines. The other day, I was recording a game where the activity was to click on a guy's head, which floated up or down to change the pitch of a note. The line was something like, "Pull the head down lower." We were all punchy and tired, and the off-color insinuations started a laugh-fest. Duke Nukem and I have fun times ad-libbing stud guy/hoochie mama stuff, as well.

GF: What advice would you give to someone who wants to be a voice actor/actress in video games?
LM: Don't quit your day job, heh heh. Seriously, I always get this thrown at me, "I've been told I have a good voice, and I've always thought it would be fun to do voice acting." Well, saddle up, cowboys; you're in for a rough ride. It's debatable what a good voice is... Linda Hunt, James Earl Jones, Donald Sutherland, Gilbert Gottfried, Fran Drescher, etc., have unique and not always pleasant voices. A million people have "good" voices, but cannot cold read, act or come up with a dynamic character to save their butts. A little martial arts training didn't hurt me, so I guess acting classes and simply learning to pick up a magazine and dynamically cold read and stay in character is a start. The sad thing is that, while I dream to be in major cartoons, that industry thinks marquee value matters, and they hire stars to do the voices. Mel Blanc and Female Blanc (that's me) are out of luck.

When it comes to games, I don't think stars have ever sold a title, so perhaps you have a better chance of breaking into the game industry. Nowhere else will you be asked to vocally differentiate between being hit with a bullet, a grenade or a rocket launcher. Be imaginative, courageous and not afraid to work really hard to find jobs.

GF: Have you ever thought about making a video game?
LM: Yes, I created a very interesting one for Paramount, *Deep Space Nine*, as well as my own original game called *Fall Of Time* that was ripped off by a major company. However, I am hoping someone will actually do my "Dyke Nukem" game ("It'll Take More Than A Finger to Plug This Dyke"). It pits the rednecks against the gays, in a game filled with wit, surprises and lots of laughs. I'm known for my jokes, as well.

GF: If people want to know more about you or voice acting in general, where can they go to learn more? Books? Websites?
LM: Try to audit classes and borrow books instead of paying a lot for them. My theory is, "Those who can... do. Those who can't... teach." There are exceptions, but I prefer to offer information without charging a wad. Too many people think that once they've paid for a class or two, they are thus qualified to hit the heights of fame and fortune. Good voice acting is much harder than it appears, but if you know a few little tricks, it makes the pain pleasurable. Check out my article here: http://www.digitalgamedeveloper.com/Htm/Tutorials/VoiceoverSecrets/Voice_over-secrets1.htm, or my website (which will eventually change to Audiogodz.com), is http://www.spicycricket.com/audiogodz.html.

Lani Minella

Dreamcast [DC]



- Crazy Taxi
- Fighting Force 2
- Jet Set Radio Dreamcast [Import]
- Shutokou Battle Racing 2 Dreamcast [Import]
- WWF Attitude

COMING SOON

- Capcom vs. SNK Dreamcast [Import] **9/05/00**
- Cool Cool Toon Dreamcast [Import] **8/10/00**
- D2 **8/22/00**
- Half-Life **9/16/00**
- NFL 2K1 **9/05/00**

Nintendo 64

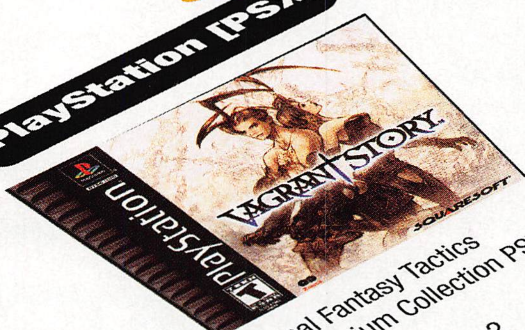


- Donkey Kong 64 (Expansion Pak Included)
- Mario Party 2
- Pokemon Snap
- The Legend Of Zelda 64: The Mask Of Mujala N64 [Import]
- Virtual Pro Wrestling 2 Title Match 64 [Import]

COMING SOON

- Aidyn Chronicles: The First Mage **9/30/00**
- Army Men Sarge's Heroes 2 **9/17/00**
- Ogre Battle 64 **9/26/00**
- Rush 2049 **9/05/00**
- Turok 3: Shadow of Oblivion **8/29/00**

PlayStation [PSX]



- Final Fantasy Tactics Millenium Collection PSX [Import]
- Gran Turismo 2
- Macross Plus Game Edition PSX [Import]
- Persona 2: Eternal Punishment PSX [Import]
- Sydney 2000

COMING SOON

- Gun Spike PSX [Import] **8/26/00**
- Metal Slug X PSX [Import] **9/10/00**
- NFL Blitz 2001 **9/12/00**
- Rayman 2 **9/16/00**
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2 **9/12/00**

Game Boy Color

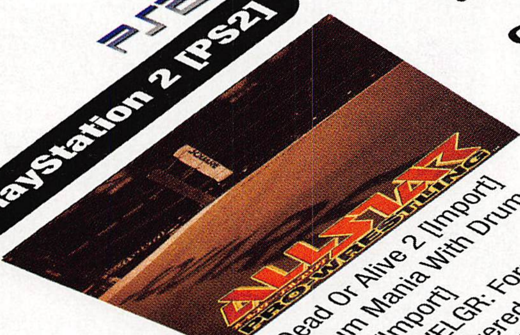


- Army Men
- ECW: Hardcore Revolution
- Pokemon Gold Game Boy Color [Import]
- Pokemon Silver Game Boy Color [Import]
- Pokemon Yellow

COMING SOON

- Dragon Warrior I & II **8/29/00**
- Gauntlet Legends **9/26/00**
- MTV Sports: TJ Lavin's Ultimate BMX **9/30/00**
- NFL Blitz 2001 **9/12/00**
- Spiderman **8/31/00**

PlayStation 2 [PS2]



- Dead Or Alive 2 [Import]
- Drum Mania With Drum Set [Import]
- HRESVELGR: Formula Highpowered [Import]
- Rock 'N Mega Stage [Import]
- TVDJ [Import]

COMING SOON

- Gran Turismo 2000 [Import] **10/15/00**
- Kessen **10/26/00**
- Kessen 2 [Import] **10/28/00**
- Tekken Tag Tournament **10/26/00**
- The Bouncer [Import] **10/18/00**

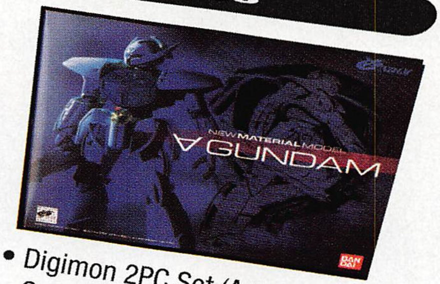


Game Music



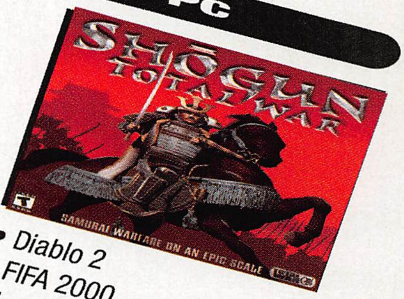
- Biohazard 2 Remix - Met@morphoses Soundtrack CD [Import]
- Dragonball Z Never Ending Story Soundtrack 2CD [Import]
- Final Fantasy 8 Original 4CD [Import]
- Silent Hill Original Soundtrack CD [Import]
- Ultima Ascension Enhanced Soundtrack CD

Figures



- Digimon 2PC Set (Agumon & Greymon) Action Figure [Import]
- Final Fantasy 8 Guardian Force 2 - Gilgamesh Action Figure
- Gundam - MS-06 Suit Zaku Die Cast Metal Action Figure [Import]
- Gundam - Silhouette Gundam Vigna Zirah XM-07G #3 Model Kit [Import]
- Rockman X All X EX Edition Action Figure [Import]

PC



- Diablo 2
- FIFA 2000
- Legoland
- Quake 3 Arena
- Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2000

COMING SOON

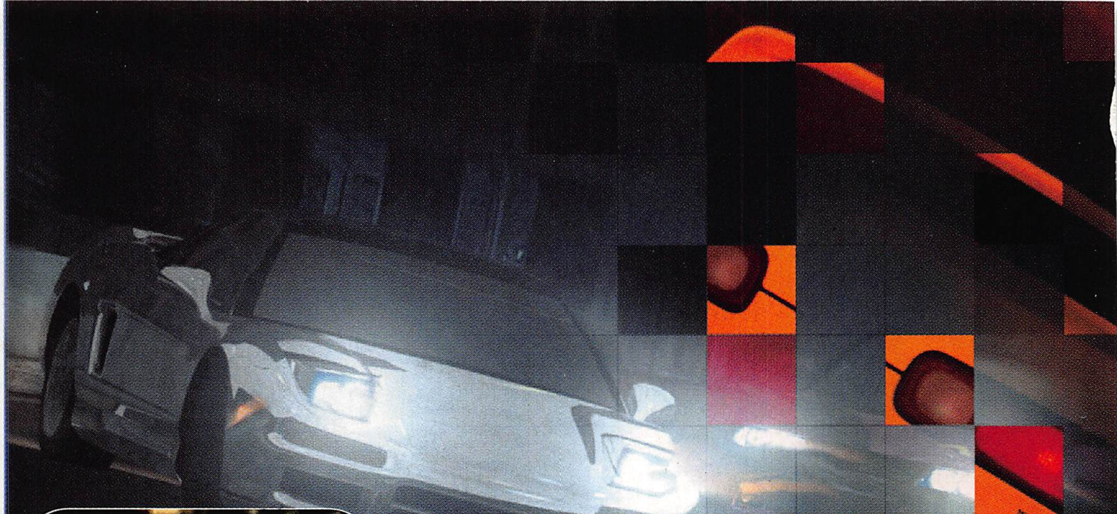
- Baldur's Gate 2: Shadows of Ann 9/15/00
- Evil Dead: Hail to the King 10/15/00
- Legends of Might & Magic 10/01/00
- Star Trek Deep Space 9 9/12/00
- Tribes 2 10/17/00

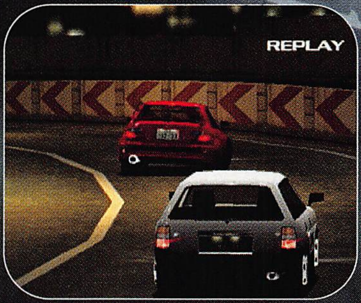
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From Hollywood to Tokyo

Well, the last month just hasn't been good for me... After a lackluster E3 (where I was only able to get horribly drunk for free once), I returned home to a very nasty surprise... an eviction notice. Some would argue that getting kicked out of your parent's house when you reach your late 20's isn't *really* the same thing as getting evicted, but let's not argue semantics and just say that I've been forced to wander the streets of Hollywood to find an apartment. Some days, it just doesn't pay to get outta bed...

Fortunately, one thing is not only going good, but better than ever: *Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2*. Genki, the game's Japanese developer, has heard the cries of 'floaty control' and 'excessively small tracks' that arose about the first *TXR*, listened, and solved both problems. *TXR2*'s control is still a little loose upwards of 260 kph (which is understandable), but it feels competent and solid the rest of the time. The overall track length has also been boosted to almost 600% the size of the original game's runs.

These changes alone instill a great deal of variety into the moonlit highways... Players can race on both sides of the track, and almost every twist and turn can be explored. It's up to you to decide which route to take (though, during races, you must take the same path as your rival), be it the long, winding overpass or the underground road flanked by cement pillars. Genki's done an amazing job replicating the look of Tokyo, right down to the towering concrete barriers and twisting asphalt roads.





Tokyo Xtreme Racer 2

"Looks great... less filler"

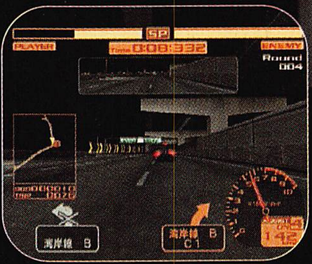
If you haven't previously experienced the *TXR* series, it's pretty straightforward. There are five modes of play from which to choose (Quest, Free Run, Time Attack, Quick Battle and Versus modes), but each one features a common theme: Stay in the lead longer than your opponent. At the start of each race (which can be initiated as simply as rolling up behind a rival car and flashing your headlights), each car is given an SP meter, and as long as you're in second place, this meter will decline and eventually run out. A race can be won or lost in less than thirty seconds, or, if you jockey for position enough times, up to two minutes.

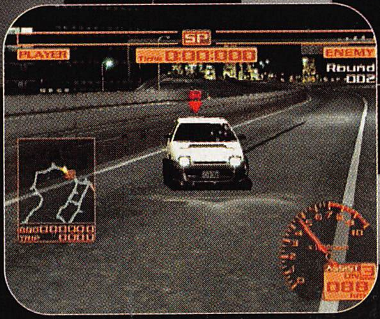
The Quest mode is definitely the meat of the game... Here, players start out with barely enough cash to buy a third-class car, and as you win races, you earn more money to trick out your ride, beef up performance or buy a better car.

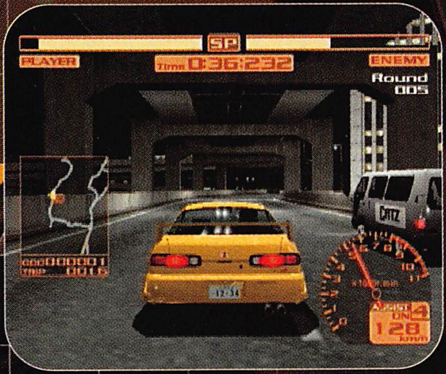
The car models themselves are nothing short of amazing. Each one, including the taxis and trucks that pepper the highway, looks clean—as good as I've seen on any console to date. Unfortunately, Genki has yet to secure the actual manufacturer licenses, which yields two things—cars that look and drive like the real thing but technically aren't, and conversations that go a little like this:



Fury: Whoa, dude, you're driving a Honda S2000!
Kodomo: Ahh... no, that's actually the Type-AP1.
Fury: What? But that is a Mitsubishi Lancer EVO VI you're racing against, right?
Kodomo: No, that's the Type CP9A6M, and how dare you not know the difference!





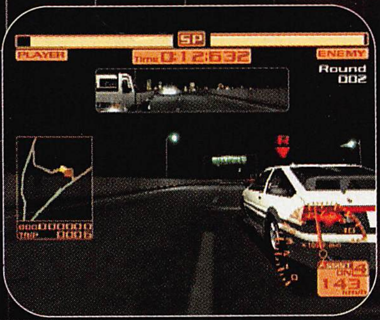


Truth be told, you'd have to look *very* closely to to able to see any difference between the *TXR2* cars and the real cars, even tricked out... The game offers five different levels of upgrades (classified from A to E), so players can change almost everything between the hood and the rear spoiler. And of course, other things such as brakes, suspension and gear ratios can be adjusted before each race.

But...?

Despite holding the lofty mantle as the best looking racer available right now for the Dreamcast, there are still a few things that hinder the game more than turbo lag. It's still way too easy to take a wrong turn, and completely negate a race. I don't know if there is anything worse than jumping out to an early lead, only to make a left instead of a right and end up with a draw. Also, the Quick Battles do live up to their names (and then some), but it's tough to really get into a race that ends at around 20 seconds, before the next one begins. Finally, the first person view is clearly best, but the other 2 obscure the road more than I care to see.

If you can live with those small gripes, and the omission of the 2-player mode that was found in the orginal, you'll find an amazing looking racer that, much like the cars, has been refined and tuned quite a bit. It's still got a few problems (nowhere near as many bugs as the final version that was released in Japan), but excells at 'Arcade feel' better than a 900hp R-34 Skyline GTR. **K**







DEVELOPER - GENKI	1-2 PLAYERS	KODOMO: TOKYO HIGHWAY MADNESS...
PUBLISHER - CRAVE	AVAILABLE FALL 2000	WITHOUT THE $100 TOLLBOOTHS.

After spending just a few hours at this year's E3, two things became very clear: 1) Some people need to invest in stronger deodorant, and 2) Kart racing is fast becoming one of the most overdone genres in recent years. Like my grandmother used to say, too much of a good thing is often bad (just try eating an entire bag of "Wow" Doritos... tastes great, but man, that leakage), and the same definitely applies to video games. But what happens when you take yet another basic kart racer and mask it with unbelievably cool graphics not unlike those of Sega's upcoming grind-a-thon and graffiti extravaganza, *Jet Grind Radio*? Unfortunately, in *Wacky Races*' case, what you get is a game that mixes beautifully stylized car models with some seriously dry gameplay.



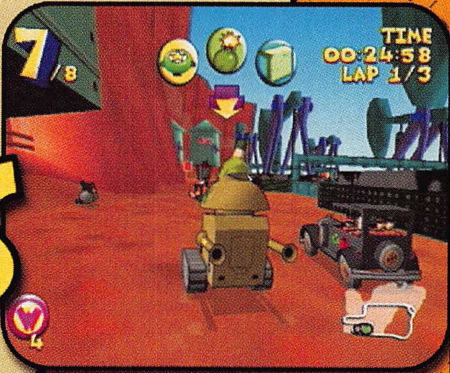


Yessir, there's nothin' better than a good gimmick, I always say. And what better attention-grabber is there than cell shading? Now, I'm not saying that *Jet Grind*'s appeal rests solely on its visual design (hey, if it can look great and play great, who's complaining?), but I will say that about *Wacky Races*. In fact, as I was playing the game at my desk, an unnamed GFO staffer (for his own safety, we'll refer to him as El Amorado de Pokémon) walked by and remarked to me about how much he liked the game. "It's like playing the actual 'Wacky Racers' cartoon," he said. "True," I replied, "but would you still play the game if the characters weren't cell shaded?" Silence followed. Thank you, Mr. Poké-fan, I think you've answered my question.



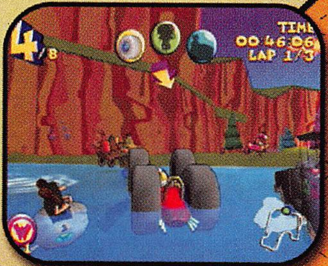


O.K., so we've established that the game looks phenomenal (almost like a mixture of *Pen Pen Tri-Icelon*'s levels and *JGR*'s graphics), but how does it play? Unfortunately, this is where the game takes a serious turn for the worse... Imagine AI so broken that you're constantly left to fend off the pack. Fight tooth and nail to get ahead, and just maybe, you'll gain a little distance from the entire cluster of competitors.



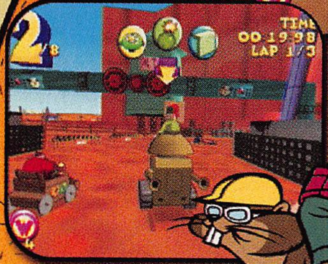
Wacky Races

But take a turn (which seems painstakingly difficult in this game) just a tad too wide (or narrow—it's quite easy to get hung up on roadside objects), and voila, it's metal on metal (or, rather, cell shading on cell shading) as you engage in a mess of jumbled bumper-car madness. Believe me, if you manage to pull yourself out of the melee, it's not because of skill (hey, you know I can attest to that!), but rather because the turns are too constricted to let the entire pack through. Of course, you could simply acquire enough Wacky Tokens (which are required to power your three available weapons) to hit the turbo boost a few times as you near the finish line—always a sign of solid game design. And as is typical with DC games, *WR* features a less-than-impressive frame-rate. You want sixty frames, watch the opening... that's as close as it gets!





A wave of kart titles is about to hit Planet Dreamcast, and sadly, not one of them has the level of intensity or overall refinement found in *Mario Kart 64* and the PlayStation's *Crash Team Racing*. I hate to keep using those games as measuring sticks for kart titles, but they've just aged too well (in light of all their recent competition) to ignore. So until someone develops an N64 emulator for DC (which will likely never happen in this lifetime), I'd recommend hitting up Bleemcast... *CTR*'s only an emulation away!





Fury would like to develop a kart racer starring all the GameFan characters... cell-shaded ECM?





Dreamcast



REVIEW	FURY: DOES ANYONE UNDER TWENTY REMEMBER "WACKY RACES"?	DEVELOPER - INFOGRAMES	1-2 PLAYERS	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 71
		PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	AVAILABLE NOW	







There's a reason why quick PC-to-DC ports are called "shovelware," and here's a hint: It's not the ease of producing them, but because of what you're more than likely 'shoveling' onto the DC. No, they're not something that have been readily mastered, from the recent *Virtua Cop 2* remake to the aptly forgotten *Expendable,* and most probably just shouldn't have been made. But then, for every ten shovelware ports, there's that one solid port (i.e., *MDK2*) that developers hope to get... So, which one is *Silver,* then?

Here's the story behind *Silver:* David, main character, gets himself into a bit of a bind early on... Silver, an evil sorcerer, orders all women of acceptable age to come to him for... well, let's just say he's looking to 'further his line' and make lots of little Silvers to inhabit the world of Jarrah. Anyway, this doesn't sit too well with David, and when he returns home, he finds that his beloved wife, Jennifer, is missing. What then? David's aged yet accomplished grandfather agrees to take the lad out in search of Silver and Jennifer. Of course, nothing's ever as simple as it first sounds, and David soon has to scour the land for eight magical weapons to defeat the sorcerer (who, coincidentally, has developed so much power that he can't be killed by any mortal).

The game looks a lot like *FF7* or *FF8* might look if they ever came to Dreamcast (don't hold your breath)... The backgrounds are 100% pre-rendered, and are interlaced with repeating shadows and light rays. That's not to say that they aren't

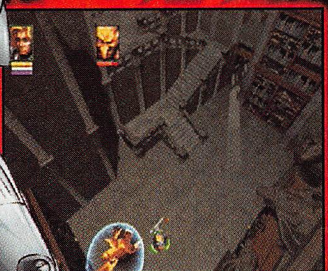
SILVER

impressive—they are—but after a while, I began to get the feeling that I was looking at something only marginally better than an older product. During play, gamers move David from screen to screen, never deviating from the pre-rendered backgrounds, and somehow, it doesn't seem to work as well as one might think when it comes to actual combat. Getting a good idea of where your characters (you gain more over time) actually are becomes no easy task. One also has to question the combat system, which, as mindlessly fun as the "hold, attack and move analog stick" mantra is, has some faults that all stem from the all-too-distant view.





On the other hand, the sound in *Silver* is probably the best I've ever heard. Its voices each have distinct accents, and, whether it's the monstrous Fuge or insightful Oracle, each fits its character very well. Combine that with music that one unnamed staffer labeled as of "epic quality," and you'll begin to appreciate the time put into the ambient arts. Sadly, even this mighty task can't save *Silver* from landing in the sea of mediocrity that plagues shovelware games, and it just isn't worth the purchase price...





Word on the streets of Hollywood is that Kodomo rarely wears shovelware, and when he does, it's usually something unusual.

VIEWPOINT SCORE :79	DEVELOPER - INFOGRAMES	1 PLAYER	KODOMO: *FF7*	R REVIEW
	PUBLISHER - SPIRAL HOUSE	AVAILABLE 3RD QTR.	ON THE DC?	



Dreamcast



SUPER RUNABOUT SAN FRANCISCO EDITION









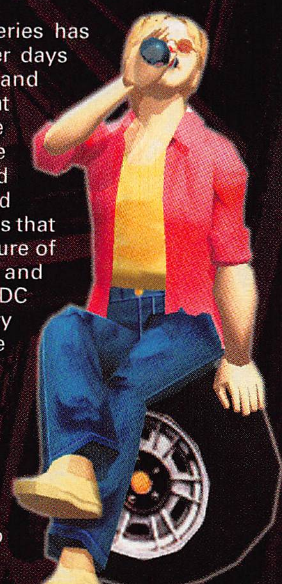
Ever try eating a meal in front of the television when someone unexpectedly changes the channel to "Trauma: Life in the ER" or the Operation Network? Suddenly, those tasty morsels in front of you just don't look so good... Well, as I sit here, attempting to review Interplay's *Super Runabout: San Francisco Editon*, Kodomo, who sits directly across from me, blazes through the gorgeous street-lit roads of *Tokyo Extreme Racer 2* (as he has for the past two days). My game bustles with light-hearted, silly play mechanics and some fairly unimpressive Dreamcast graphics, and his game... well, let's just say that life does not always deal such fair cards.

Super Runabout: SFE is the second installment to Climax's (the developer responsible for *Landstalker*, *Dark Savior*, *Climax Landers*, etc.) long-running *Runabout* series, known in the U.S. as *Felony 1179*. Now, if you haven't played a *Runabout* title before, you might be looking at these shots and thinking to yourself, "Man, this game sort of reminds me of *Crazy Taxi*." Well, *Super Runabout: SFE* may sort of/kind of resemble *Crazy Taxi* a little, but please, let's be sparing with the references... Sure, both games use the hilly, looping streets of San Francisco as frenzied backdrops, both include some fast-paced arcade-like gameplay and, of course, both encourage a healthy dose of citywide destruction, but that's really all the two titles have in common. It's just too bad that *Crazy Taxi*—in which Sega seemingly borrows from *Runabout*—turned out to be a much better game. You think that *Crazy Taxi* inspired the whole "innocent bystanders madly rushing for cover" theme, or was the first game to offer drivers complete freedom of a city? Well, I got news for ya—*Runabout*'s been doing that for years already. But boy, leave it to Sega to take a simple premise and turn it into solid gold...

O.K., so maybe you're not racing the clock to get your passenger to KFC, but *Super Runabout: SFE* still earns a few points for incorporating some of the oddest missions ever found in a racing game. At the beginning, players must select either the 5.0 performance group (the police), or make things a bit more interesting and select a caravan of poor folk (not unlike the kin of ex-GF editor Big Bubba). Depending on which category you choose, the vehicle selection and the level objectives change completely. Pick the fuzz, and prepare to engage in a ridiculous race to collect mustard and ketchup bottles hidden throughout the city. Or simply choose the underprivileged, hop aboard a moped or pig (yes, as in bacon) and tail an Indy car around the city... up hills, down hills, through windows, storefronts, etc. And, as always, raking up massive amounts of dough by barreling into roadside objects is certainly recommended.

Unfortunately, such carnage often creates poor vehicle physics... Let me tell you, it doesn't get much more frustrating than watching your vehicle slide out of control, strike an oncoming car, crash into a parked car, careen into a trolley car and then... you get the drift, right? And boy, you'd better pray you don't fly into a series of slow flips and rotations that'll inevitably cost you precious seconds as you attempt to stay within each level's set time limit...

The *Runabout* series has definitely seen better days over the years, and sadly, it appears that the DC rev is the weakest of the bunch. Busted physics combined with lackluster visuals that remind me of a mixture of *Test Drive 6* and *Roadsters* on the DC spell one thing very clearly... you'd be much better served investing in a copy of *Crazy Taxi*.

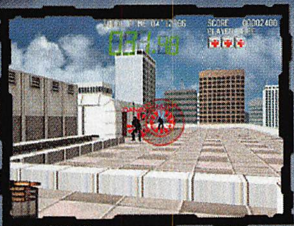


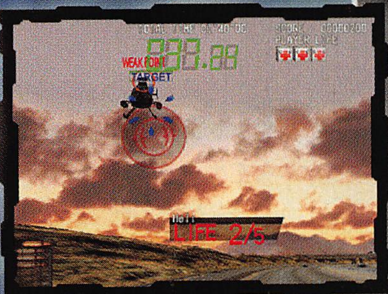
Fury would much rather write about games like Motor Madness *than* Tokyo Extreme Racer 2.

REVIEW	FURY: I'D RATHER HAVE MOTOR MADNESS THAN SPACE MADNESS.	DEVELOPER - CLIMAX PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 70

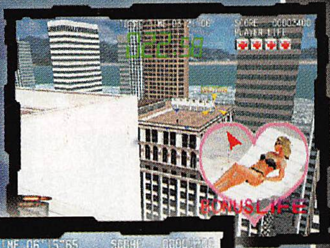
SILENT SCOPE™

I can think of a number of things in this world that are silent and deadly, but perhaps none are as lethal as Konami's sniper gun game, *Silent Scope*. When I first encountered the *SS* arcade cabinet several months back, I was instantly attracted to the game... It didn't hurt that it came equipped with a large rifle and working scope (Ever seen the movie "Navy Seals" with Charlie Sheen? Remember the character called "God?"). The premise of *SS* was simple: Terrorists kidnap the President's daughter (hmmm, never heard that one before... jeez, I hope Socks is O.K.), and it's up to your quick thinking and long-range skills to take them out before they get a bead on your location. Sure, it might sound like child's play at first glance, but once behind the sight, things quickly turn as chaotic as a Lakers championship celebration (oh, I'm sorry, was that your white Ford Expedition I just reduced to ash?). Needless to say, I was pretty damn excited when Konami announced Dreamcast and PS2 ports. But how in the world could they hope to keep the fun intact without releasing an ultra-expensive peripheral to go along with the home versions? First a fishing controller, then a set of bright red maracas, and now, a long-barreled sniper rifle? Where's Chuck Heston when you need him!





Apparently, Konami must have agreed with me, because just a few days ago, it stopped by the GameFan digs with both a DC and PS2 build of *Silent Scope*. Yeah, I was a bit disappointed that Konami didn't spend all that time and money engineering a sight to attach to already existing light guns, but oh well—obviously, it had its hand full readying the U.S. version of *Gradius III&IV* (hey, never underestimate the power of 16-bit graphics). Luckily for us, though, the home editions of *Silent Scope* actually play and look identical to their arcade counterpart (hey, it wasn't like *SS* ran on powerful hardware in the first place). And if you're wondering how Konami replicated the control scheme, here's the scoop: The game's **always** zoomed in. Hold down the left trigger, and the sight will zoom out and enable quicker movements so you can get the next unlucky chap in your sites. Once you've acquired a target (which is highlighted, and change color depending on how soon the enemy is set to fire back, much like *Virtua Cop)*, all you have to do is release the left trigger, and you're instantly focused, "Negotiator"-style (only you're not here to negotiate—it's full breach all the way!).

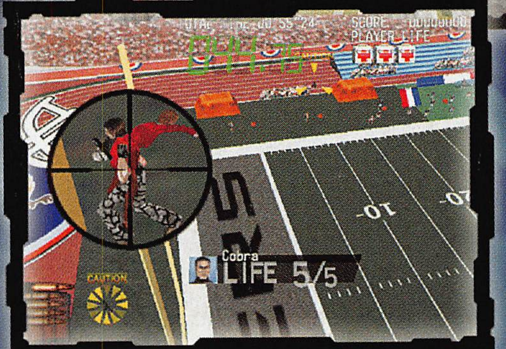




Now, for all you PS2-heads who find it common practice to belittle Sega and all its wonderful consoles (just between you and me, I heard the 32X chipset was sabotaged by an elite force of Nintendo commandos—doesn't that explain it all?), here's a bit of interesting news... Both the PS2 and DC revs of *SS* look very much alike, but the truth (and this comes straight from Konami's mouth, so yell at them if our word isn't good enough) is that the DC rev has better-looking, higher-res textures. Hey, don't ever discount those few extra megs of texture RAM!

Silent Scope DC is still a bit off from release (it's currently scheduled for shipment alongside the PS2 version at the console's launch in October), and Konami's promised a few added goodies for the various revs—things like an indoor/outdoor shooting range and a free coupon for ten dollars off a hundred body bags at Dave's Den of Death.

Things are looking promising for Konami's LAPD sim... For now, you can occupy yourself by hollowing out bullet tips and watching "In the Line of Fire," "Falling Down" and "Full Metal Jacket." Just tell mom it's for 'research...' **F**



DEVELOPER - KONAMI	1 PLAYERS	FURY: A GREAT
PUBLISHER - KONAMI	AVAILABLE OCT '00	WAY TO 'KILL' TIME!

P PREVIEW

F355 challenge











What true-blooded arcade hound wasn't praying that Sega would unveil *Daytona 2* at E3? If there was one game that could effortlessly dethrone *Sega Rally 2* as my favorite Dreamcast racer, it would have to be AM2's stock car masterpiece. But in the meantime, the highly anticipated *Shutokou Battle 2* is ready to roll onto Japanese store shelves, and Yu Suzuki's decided to bless hungry gamers with a port of his latest NAOMI racer—the incredible *Ferrari F355 Challenge*. Uh, *Sega Rally* who?!?

If you're among the few that have actually played *F355* in the arcade, then you can appreciate the challenge Sega faced in bringing it home... The arcade cabinet sported three monitors and four NAOMI chipsets (one just for sound?!), not to mention a full working gearbox and clutch. It was basically the arcade cabinet equivalent of the real Italian supercar. Even the seat perfectly mimicked that luxurious Italian red leather! But how, then, could the game fare on the DC, stripped of all its glorious bells and whistles?

Cue now the collective sigh of the entire GameFan staff... Yes, friends, from the look of it, Suzuki's DC conversion of *F355* is easily set to join the ranks of port perfection. Our preview version only showcased a few of the available play modes (including Arcade and Versus), but is already looking unbelievably solid—we're talking sixty steady frames per second (in single-player mode) with visuals that'll put anything done in previous DC racers to shame. Actually, I'm having a hard time deciding which car models I'm more impressed with—*Shutokou Battle 2*'s or *F355*'s. And if you're wondering how the environments fare, all you have to do is gaze upon the gorgeous sky to get a feel for how crisp the graphics are... Speaking of which,



each of the six tracks features races at random times of the day—and believe me, nothing quite brings a tear to the eye like watching a Ferrari blaze a 150-mph trail down a Long Beach track at sunset.

Now, unlike most Sega racers, Yu Suzuki wanted *Ferrari* to focus on real car physics rather than insane "seat of your pants" power slides. Unfortunately, for serious arcade buffs, that means some unforgiving sim-like control... Leave it to good ol' AM2, though, to look out for the many Furys of the world—handicaps like stability control, traction control, anti-lock braking and intelligent braking have been included to give novices an edge over their seasoned competitors. Of course, if you'd rather test your speed shifting abilities, *Ferrari* also offers intermediate and professional categories that tone down the computer assists.

When *Ferrari* is finally finished, it'll sport a number of DC-only options such as link play (seeing as how we own the only existing link cable in the world, though, good luck!), driving data, car settings, Internet rankings, network features and an extremely thorough and much-needed (to say the least) training mode. As for that clutch and stick, only time will tell just how important they were to the overall package. It's too bad Sega had to toss 'em out; they would've been a perfect excuse to release another single-use peripheral... unless the *Samba de Amigo* maracas could somehow be used as shifters. F

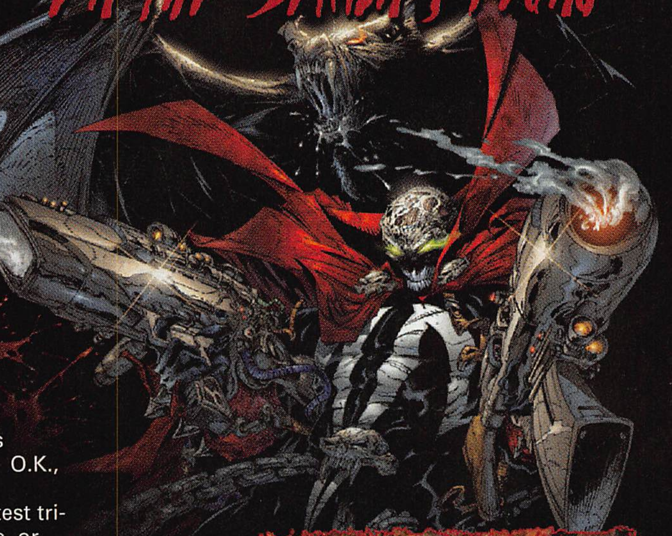
FURY: Prestige, legacy and pride.	Developer - Sega	2 Players
This is where it all begins...	Publisher - Acclaim	Available Nov '00

Spawn™

In the Demon's Hand







What kills me the most about the dire state of the arcade market is that, outside of a few really hard-core arcades (no, Gameworks doesn't count... silly teenager), most don't ever get to see the best of the best titles. See, in order to do this, the arcade you frequent has to a) stock import titles and b) make money on them, and for the uninitiated, this is about as likely as Dennis Miller hosting Monday Night Football. Huh? He's what?! O.K., maybe it's not **that** unusual... Anyway, games like *Spike Out, Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram* (you *did* buy the DC port, right?) and even Capcom's latest triumph, *Spawn: In the Demon's Hand*, either weren't officially released here, or were brought so sparingly into U.S. arcades (as in *Spawn*'s case) that gamers were about as likely to see Elvis alive than to see them... and that's not good.

Now, before this article spirals into a Death of the Arcades rant, I'm actually going to attempt to try and tell you why *Spawn* was such a great game. What's that? You want to know why *Spawn* **was** a great game? In a word (or is it a phrase?): multi-player.






Let me start out by saying that *Spawn* was a phenomenal arcade title... Get four cabs together with three meat puppets at the controls (your former friends), and prepare for the greatest arcade 'fighting' game since *Street Fighter*. *Spawn* featured all the insane, off-the-wall gameplay of the PC classic *Quake* coupled with the eye-shattering character designs of Todd "Bow Before Me, Mortals" McFarlane. The options were wonderful, as well: Players could compete in two-man teams or go at it every-man-for-himself-style (the preferred method of rending flesh and bone). Well, as soon as it was official that *Spawn* was coming to DC, I rejoiced and let out a whoop of unfettered joy—one of the greatest arcade games in recent memory was coming home! To a console with a built-in modem! Can you just imagine the four-player, over-the-top insanity?!? Friday night would never be the same again... out with the girlfriend, in with *Spawn*! *Spawn, Spawn, Spawn*!!!

Alas, it may not be... Capcom held out hope that SegaNet support would make it into the final of DC *Spawn,* but it **probably** isn't going to happen. So, while Japanese players revel in their DC-to-arcade connection via Capcom's own KDD network, we get nil. Well, not completely nothing; just the harrowing four-player microscopic Windows of Death treatment that we're used to on the DC and N64 (I'm still trying to get over the *Slave Zero* split-screen mode... if you weren't claustrophobic before playing that game, you will be.



The game's still fairly playable, but simply isn't the same without the multi-player aspect; it's hardly the same thing. And while there's still some time to go before it's ready to ship, the simple fact that it's going to lack SegaNet support is a glaring failure on the part of somebody... presumably Sega, after the *Street Fighter Alpha 3* debacle.

There's still some time left to optimize the game, of course, but the simple fact is that *Spawn* is a multi-player game at heart, and it's a sin that what could prove to be a killer app on Sega's embryonic online network is now just another really graphically intense Dreamcast game. Right now, I'm hoping and praying and kicking and screaming (with just a little begging) that **someone** at either Sega **or** Capcom sees the light—'cause as of right now, things are looking pretty hellish... **ECM**



Developer - Capcom	1-4 Players	ECM: Just say "no!" to split screen.
Publisher - Capcom	Available 3rd Qtr.	

Preview

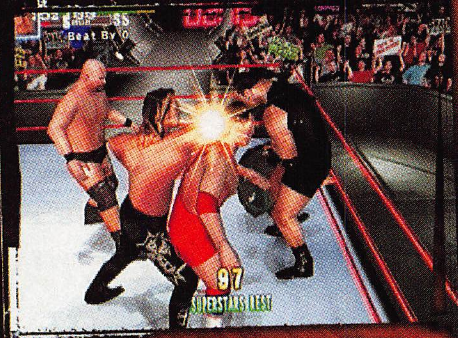
WWF Royal Rumble

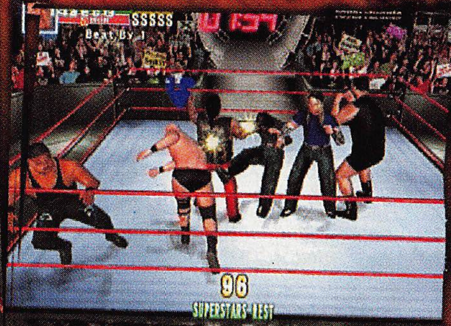
Llllet's get rrrrready to... (Royal) Ruuuuuumbbbblllllleeeeeeee! By now, wrestling fans should be quite familiar with THQ and its quality lineup of *WWF* titles... titles that lack that bad attitude of Acclaim's wrestling properties. *WWF Smackdown* is one of the best-selling PlayStation games ever, and *WWF Wrestlemania 2000* was a tremendous success for N64 last Christmas... So what does the Dreamcast have to show to make the other consoles jealous? It has *WWF Royal Rumble*, a collaboration between Sega (which is handling the arcade publishing duties. THQ is bringing it to Dreamcast) and Yukes (developer of the mega-popular *Toukon Retsuden* wrestling series in Japan).

For better or for worse, *WWF Royal Rumble* will play more like an arcade game than a standard console wrestler, which means that it won't be loaded with all the bells and whistles that console wrestleheads are used to, like create-a-wrestler, pay-per-view and career modes, etc. In fact, *RR* features just over twenty wrestlers.

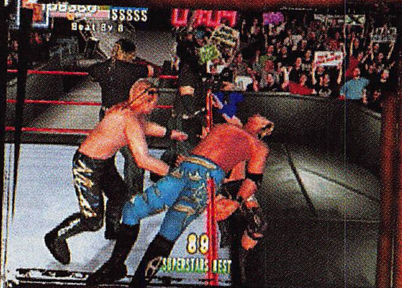
The name of the game is *Royal Rumble*, and that's exactly what it is—an action-packed, over-the-top bout of "King of the Hill." The way it works is simple: Every minute, a new wrestler enters the fray, until the ring eventually becomes packed with a bunch of big, sweaty men in spandex (Fury has a soft spot for that) and the fighting escalates into one massive free-for-all. Contestants are eliminated when they're tossed out of the ring and their feet hit the ground. Things really get interesting when more than five wrestlers are in the ring, sucker punching each other, body slamming others over the top rope and hanging onto the ropes for their very lives... It's action-packed arcade wrestling at its finest.





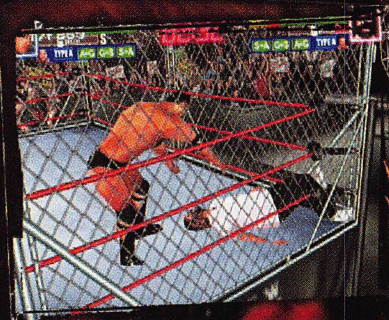




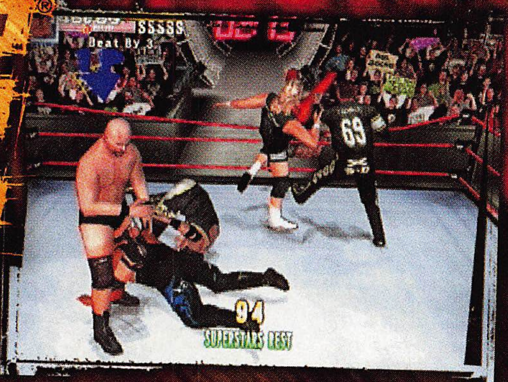


The game also has an exhibition mode, though, which pits players against another tag team... but there's more to it than that. From time to time, the lights go out, and when they come back on, players will find themselves in a random backstage area outside the ring. And just like *WWF Smackdown*, these backstage areas are filled to the brim with handy (albeit illegal) props that you can use to fix someone's face... such as road cones, fire extinguishers and the ever-popular shopping cart!

The controls are extremely simple (remember, this is modeled after an arcade game), but do feature some basic multi-hit combos, in addition to the standard counters, grapples and team combos. What's most impressive is that the game allows up to nine wrestlers on-screen at once with no slow-down. In our version, not all of the extra wrestlers were doing much (many were standing around cheering), but that could all change when the game's finalized in a few months. Stay tuned for the full review... E







P PREVIEW	EGGO: Royal Rumble... a Big Show or simply Stone Cold?	Developer - Yukes Publisher - THQ	1-4 Players Available Fall '00



The future's always a tricky thing... One popular image of the future is of apocalyptic doom and humans living alongside the mighty cockroach, eating cold beans from cans (or is that my new apartment...?). Another school of thought envisions massive, towering cites and advanced racing machines cutting through tracks like glass through Fury's foot (we like to call him John McClane, Jr.).

Thankfully, Crave's taking the latter approach in its PlayStation-to-Dreamcast conversion of *MagForce Racing*, formerly known as *Killer Loop*. In this futuristic game, fuel shortages abound, and the great minds of the time collaborate to create magneto-kinetic (MK) technology that allows specially modified vehicles to reach excessively high speeds with magnets... What this means to you and me is that a racer very much in the vein of the highly acclaimed *Wipeout* series will soon be making a pit stop on the Dreamcast.



The game features twenty-two vehicles, and the action looks fast at this early stage. The goal is to finish every race in first place, but players will have help along the way... The nine courses are well laid out, and tout a plethora of massive loops, corkscrews and circular tubes. By collecting magnetic crystals and charging your vehicle's magnetic meter, you can defy gravity for a spell and stick to even the most insanely placed walls. There's nothing like springing to the ceiling and passing a long line of opponents.





You'll also have thirteen weapons to collect via weapon pods, which range from mines to missiles. The game also features an excellent upgrade system, wherein a weapon can be juiced up a total of three times (i.e., if you collect a Simple Missile, it will become a Homing Missile, then a Multi-Missile), then it provides a brief turbo jolt and shield beam. Thankfully, Crave's included a host of weapon pods in each lap, so players don't have to wait until the ends of races to bring down an opponent with a Multi-Missile.

As it stands, *MagForce Racing* is heading in the right direction, with intensely fast multi-player action (oh yes, you can play with up to four people via split screen). The current frame-rate is quite healthy, as well, hovering above 30 fps, and the Dreamcast can definitely handle its clean graphics with little worry. Expect *MFR* to raise the standard for air racers very soon. **K**









DEVELOPER - VCC	**1-4 PLAYERS**	**KODOMO: BETTER THAN WIPEOUT?**
PUBLISHER - CRAVE	**AVAILABLE 2ND QTR. '00**	

P PREVIEW

Coming Soon

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

Dreamcast



Cannon Spike

Developer
Capcom

Publisher
Capcom

The highly anticipated Capcom action shooter in which Capcom characters from various franchises get to shoot really big guns at stuff that explodes. Think *Expendable*, but good... or at least better.





Dreamcast

Max Steel

Developer
Treyarch

Publisher
Mattel



Based on the popular toy line, *Max Steel* is a futuristic anti-terrorist commando battling the evil DREAD. Puzzle-solving and really big guns will be the highlight of this title.



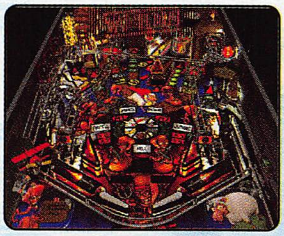


Worms Pinball

Developer
Team 17

Publisher
Infogrames

Our favorite multiplayer combatants are back! Oh, how the GameFan office is writhing in anticipation over this title, although we haven't a clue as to what is apart from the obvious.









Namco Museum

Developer
Namco

Publisher
Namco

The classic Namco games of yore are here. Whether *Galaga* is your game or *Pole Position,* rest assured it will be just as ugly on the Dreamcast as it was on every other system. Nostalgia...





Sarge's Heroes

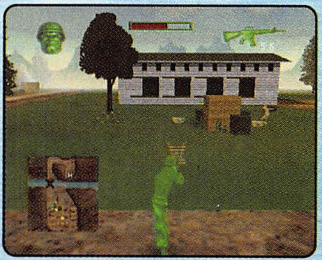
Developer
Avalanche

Publisher
Midway



Because you can never have too many *Army Men* games, that's why. And, if you can't detect the sacrasm which is dripping off my tongue, then you are a fool. Let this franchise go, people.

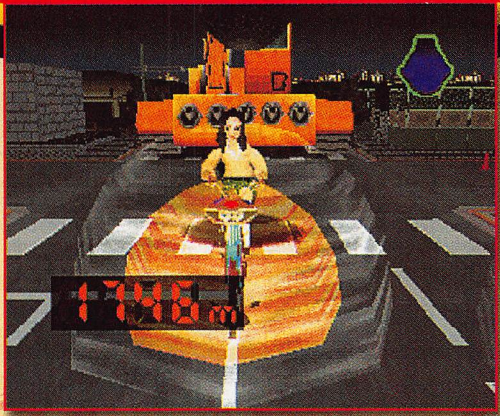




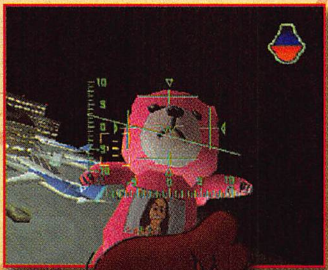


PlayStation
Danger Never Looked So Good!
COLLECTORS ITEM!
Manual features exclusive character sketches, bios and artwork from the creators!
3rd person action-adventure has never been sexier with DANGER GIRL, the only videogame based on the best-selling comic book series by J. Scott Campbell and Andy Hartnell.
Dare to take control of 3 beautiful yet lethal Danger Girls in an espionage-themed thrill-ride deemed too dangerous for any man to handle!
Danger Girl
PlayStation
Varied modes of play: stealth, sniper and more
Dozens of weapons (whips–need we say more?)
Original art by the creators
Classic Danger Girl signature moves
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence
Animated Blood
Suggestive Themes
Danger Girl-The Game © 2000 n-Space, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Danger Girl was created by J. Scott Campbell & Andy Hartnell. DANGERGIRL characters and images TM & © 2000 ATOMICO. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. Licensed by Sony Computer Entertainment America for use with the PlayStation game console. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Published and Distributed by THQ Inc. THQ and the THQ logo are trademarks of THQ Inc. All Rights Reserved.
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Incredible Crisis



Ah, mini-games... pleasant diversions with the ability to shatter monotony and reestablish fun when a game wavers on the brink of seriousness. Yes, mini-games offer a quick challenge and a new set of skills to master in a condensed span of time, and are always refreshing. *Incredible Crisis,* the latest game of mini-games, is like *Mario Party* without the multi-player aspect. It's a collection of mini-games crammed together, bundled up with duct tape and sold as a single product. The end result is the wackiest, most intriguing, fun PlayStation game of the year, high on gimmicky novelty, yet extremely low on replay value. Once you've finished it, I doubt you'll ever touch it again, unless you dust it off when friends come looking for a quick, amusing gaming fix...





The premise is simple: Players must help four members of a Japanese family get back home. It's not as easy as it sounds, unfortunately... Taneo, the father, must deal with a wrecking ball that's demolishing his office and trying to flatten him, dodge oncoming traffic while strapped to an out-of-control gurney, and fend off a squadron of jet fighters while protecting an alien mother ship. Etsuko, the mother of the family, has her own set of tribulations as well, including stealing a golden pig by filling a weight plate with equivalent items from her shopping bag, snowboarding for her life while avoiding thieves on snowmobiles, and flying a jet fighter home in time to cook dinner. Their young son, Tsuyoshi, has been shrunk, and must flee from a hungry ant, then walk a tightrope across a giant web and dodge the menac-





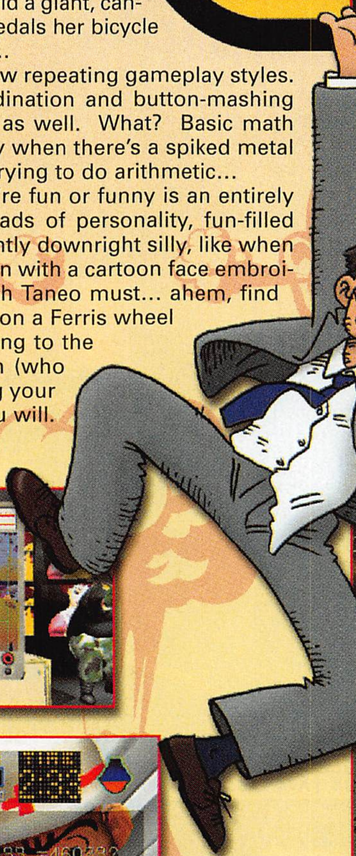


ing owner of that web, while Ririka, the pretty daughter, must sneak out of class under the watchful eye of an angry high school teacher, play a game of *Simon* with an alien mother ship and avoid a giant, cannonball-shooting crane that tries to flatten her as she pedals her bicycle home. And these games are just the tip of the iceberg…

There are twenty-four mini-games in all, with very few repeating gameplay styles. The majority of the mini-games test hand-eye coordination and button-mashing skills, but a few of them actually exercise the brain, as well. What? Basic math skills? No problem, right? Hey, it's not quite that easy when there's a spiked metal plate descending from the ceiling, and you're madly trying to do arithmetic…

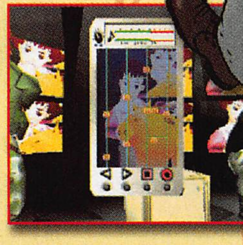
Any game can sport mini-games, but whether they're fun or funny is an entirely different story. Fortunately, *Incredible Crisis* has loads of personality, fun-filled gameplay **and** quirky humor. Its situations are frequently downright silly, like when a pink, Godzilla-sized teddy bear rampages across town with a cartoon face embroidered on its chest. There's also a mini-game in which Taneo must… ahem, find the right spot while massaging a female secret agent on a Ferris wheel at night. You search for the promised land by listening to the aural cues (read: "moaning") of the lady in question (who happens to be Fujiko of "Lupin III" fame) and adjusting your hands accordingly—a racy version of *Battleship*, if you will. This mini-game is truly an otaku's dream come true…









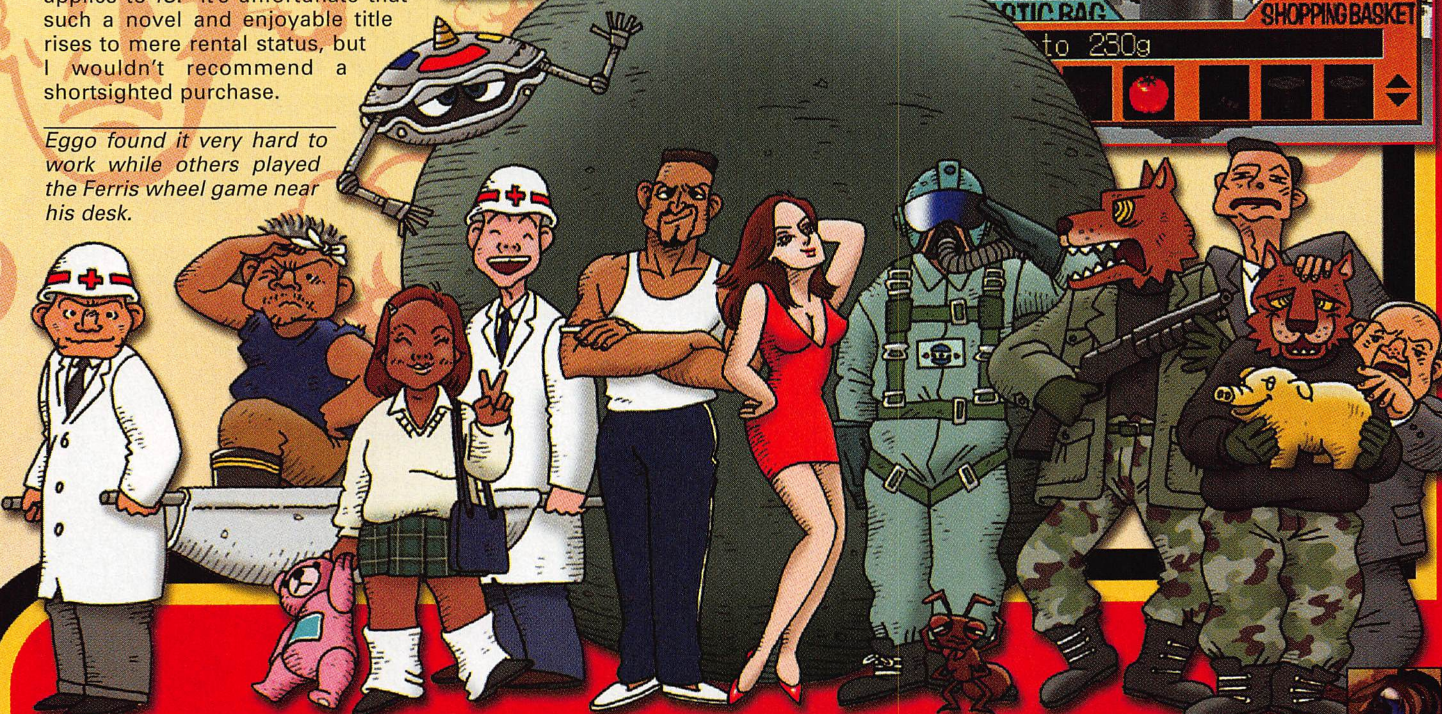






Once you've beaten *Incredible Crisis* (which shouldn't take more than a day or two), a library opens up in which you can play any of the mini-games, any time you want. However, once you've seen them all, there really is no reason to do them over again, and the same applies to *IC*. It's unfortunate that such a novel and enjoyable title rises to mere rental status, but I wouldn't recommend a shortsighted purchase.

Eggo found it very hard to work while others played the Ferris wheel game near his desk.



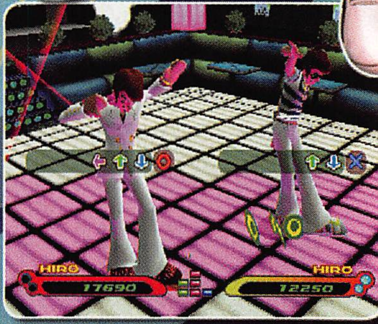
Viewpoint Score	Developer - Tokuma Shoten	1-2 Players	Eggo: The party's on the PlayStation!
:79	Publisher - Titus	Available Sep '00	

Review

Bust A Groove 2







Bust A Groove was (and still is) one of the best games in the music genre, so you can understand why I was looking forward to the sequel to Enix's dance and rhythm game for quite some time. And when the Japanese version came out last year, it had deeper gameplay, more characters and better graphics than the first. I was overjoyed. However, the most important aspect of a successful music game—the music—was lacking... The famous studio Avex Trax had produced the J-pop songs for the original game, but for some reason, Enix decided to go with another studio for the sequel, and as a result, its music simply isn't as good as that of its predecessor.

So, my main complaint about the Japanese version of this game—the music—hasn't been fixed, nor was I expecting Enix of America to do anything about it... What the company did do was translate and re-record certain songs in English—except it sounds like the same singer who did the revised vocals for the original game. Her singing is improved in *BAG2*, but the music itself isn't as catchy as the original's, and considering that music is the most important factor in a game like this (naturally), anything blasé hurts it tremendously. Enix did a fine job with the localization of the songs, but the music itself is not up to par with the rest of the high-quality package.

Eggo has been unsuccessful thus far in his efforts to open a U.S. branch of the Avex Trax fan club.



R REVIEW	Eggo: Who you callin' "Shorty"?	Developer - Enix Publisher - Enix	1-2 Players Available Aug '00	Viewpoint Score :80

Valkyrie Profile











This game has amazingly high standards... The 2D character portraits are gorgeous, the animation is abundant, the music is exceptional and the skills and magic learning are deep, just like in *Star Ocean 2* (another Tri-Ace creation). More importantly, Enix of America has maintained the high standards carried over from the Japanese game with a very solid translation. Unlike some RPGs, like *Legend of Dragoon*, which had a really rough translation (as if they'd taken the text of the translator and thrown it directly into the game without copy editing it), the text in *Valkyrie* is top-notch. Characters speak in character, and there's a lot of spoken dialogue to further develop the mood. The voice acting's quite good, as well. There are a few voices I can do without, but the majority of the voiceovers are a lot better than those of most games.

The visuals and music are both engrossing as well, and, combined with the constant, morbid theme of death, develop very thick atmosphere. My only gripe about the game is that its battles aren't fun. They're button-mashing-fests laced with over-the-top 20+-hit combos that require no skill whatsoever. If the fighting weren't a time-consuming chore to be avoided at all costs, *Valkyrie Profile* would be one of the greatest RPGs ever... Still, it's definitely worth checking out.

Eggo hates mashed buttons. He prefers his buttons lightly sauteed with garlic and basil (and a pinch of oregano).




R REVIEW	Eggo: It's all good—almost...	Developer - Tri-Ace Publisher - Enix	1 Player Available Aug '00	Viewpoint Score :90

VALKYRIE VOICES

GF Interviews Valkyrie Profile Cast Members

Eric Stuart
(Lucian, Grey, Roland, Suo, Bloodbane)

GameFan: Your website (www.ericstuart.com) looks like you're promoting the band more than your voice acting. What's up with that?
Eric Stuart: Music is what I really do. I'm a professional singer/songwriter who's toured with Ringo Starr and his All Starr Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Peter Frampton, etc. The voice acting was something that I stumbled upon. It makes it easier to be a musician when you make money at another job.

GF: How long have you been doing voices, and how did you get into the voice acting business?
ES: I worked at a recording studio for ten years. There, I learned how to produce and direct commercials. As my music career became busier, I needed to change my schedule a bit. I auditioned for "Slayers" (in which I play Gourry), and got that series. From there, Taj productions kept me in their roster of voice actors. When "Pokémon" came along, they called me in for that, as well. And the rest is history…

GF: What's the funniest thing that's happened to you in a recording studio?
ES: Well, I would have to say working on "Slayers" over at a studio called Sonomat. We had a lot of fun. I have a tendency to use expletives in my outtakes… O.K., I curse like a truck driver! Anyway, the engineer, Dan, likes to save these outbursts and paste them into the show—so every once in a while, we'll listen to playback, and Gourry will say something that would be bleeped out of every show on television. It's funny because it actually looks like he's saying those words!

GF: You mentioned you read our magazine. How long have you been playing video games? More importantly, do you play any of the "Pokémon" games?
ES: I've been a 'vidiot' since my Atari 2600 (I still have it and 50+ games). I have the original NES (50+ games), Genesis (with the 32x adapter and 50+ games), PlayStation (50+) games, Game Boy (3 games) and some Mac games like *Unreal*, *Quake 1* & *2* and *Unreal Tournament*, to name a few. But out of all these systems, games and stuff, I have no *Pokémon* video games. Not my kind of game… I like first-person shooters and games like *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil*. *Pokémon* is too cute for me.

GF: Our anime editor Shidoshi… Should he be worshipped as an idol for all things anime, or stuffed in a bag and beaten up by a rowdy group of football players?
ES: Stuffing him in a bag is kind of hard-core. Maybe just a light slapping around the face and neck…

Tara Jayne
Llewelynn, Yumei, Shiho, Nanami, Millia, Ai, Claire, Celia, Lemia

GameFan: How long have you been doing this, and how many different voices are you capable of?
Tara Jayne: I started doing radio and television commercial voice-over work when I was sixteen, but it wasn't until about two years ago that I got into animation and video game voices. The first animation job I got was "Pokémon," and I had no idea what it was or how popular it would be when I first started doing it. I'm not really sure how many voices I'm capable of… it totally varies. On "Pokémon," I mostly did voices for younger characters, but on "Celebrity Deathmatch," I did voices for Rosanna Arquette, Alyssa Milano and one of the Dixie Chicks.

GF: What are the differences between voice acting for anime/cartoons and for video games? Which do you prefer, and which is more challenging?
TJ: There is a lot less time to establish a character when you're working on a video game. For the anime work, we dub to picture—meaning we watch the original cartoon and talk to match the character's mouth flap. It's much easier to get a sense of the character when you're watching the actual animation. For *Valkyrie Profile*, we saw pictures and read descriptions of the characters, but we didn't see the animation. They're both fun, but the video game work went faster because we weren't concerned with the mouth flap. I think I enjoy the cartoon work more, because in video games, there are a lot more fighting sounds to make, and I'm so afraid of losing my voice!

GF: If someone wants to be a voice actor/actress, what advice would you give him or her?
TJ: I think the best thing to do is make a really great demo tape, which unfortunately, can cost a lot of money. Then, it's really about marketing yourself and finding an agent. I used to mail my tapes to tons of recording studios or to people that put casting notices in trade papers like "Backstage." I actually have no idea who referred me for my "Pokémon" job. I'd love to thank whoever it was.

GF: What's the funniest thing that's happened to you in the recording studio?
TJ: Sometimes, if I have more than one voice-over job in a day, I'll forget which voice I'm doing, and even in the middle of the session jump between voices. You can start to feel like you have multiple personalities on days like that. There have been a few times when my director has laughed at me and said, "What voice was that??!!" and I realize that I had just spoken in an entirely different voice that I had used at another job earlier in the day.

GF: Do you ever surprise kids on the streets with a sudden outburst by Bulbasaur?
TJ: I am sooooo tempted to do that, but it kind of borders on cruel. My friends sometimes embarrass me by going over to kids and telling them that I'm Bulbasaur. Really, little kids don't get the concept of a voice behind the cartoon, and a lot of kids think it's a guy doing the voice of Bulbasaur. I don't like to ruin the illusion for them. The fun thing for me is to ask kids to do the Bulbasaur sound, especially when they don't know it's my voice they're imitating!

Megan Hollingshead
Valkyrie and others

GameFan: How long have you been a professional voice actor? Do you have a background in this sort of thing?
Megan Hollingshead: I've been voice acting for about three years now. I had studied acting and performed in various off-off-Broadway plays, as well as independent and student films, when a friend called to ask if I did voiceovers, and would I like to audition? I assumed it would be a commercial audition, so I prepared by mimicking T.V. commercials for an afternoon. The audition turned out to be for "Pokémon," and you can imagine my surprise when I saw the sides, which were a far cry from shampoo commercials. Improvisation has always terrified me, but when the director asked, "Do you have a little boy voice? How about a Morgan Fairchild-type villain?" I just jumped in. It was exhilarating! Happily, I was cast as Nurse Joy, one of "Pokémon's" recurring characters. Nurse Joy's voice is higher, sweeter and a little more musical than my natural speaking voice.

GF: Is it true that Pikachu is evil incarnate?
MH: Absolutely not! I love Pikachu and, seriously, from an acting point of view, I am in admiration of the woman who does Pikachu's voice, because she wrings volumes of expression out of the words "Pika" and "chu." It's uncanny!

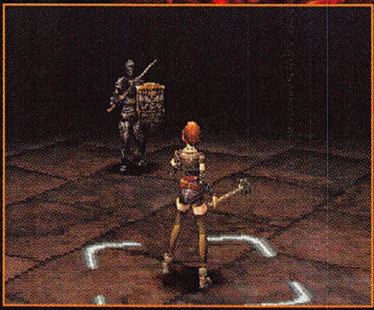
GF: In Valkyrie Profile, the main character, Valkyrie, is a very strong female lead. Was it fun doing the voice for her, or would you rather play a leading villain?
MH: Actually, I got to do both. Lenneth Valkyrie is kind of the "good" lead female, but I also did Hrist Valkyrie, who was sort of like her evil side. If you'd asked me before I did it, I would have probably said the villain would be more fun. In general, I think villains have more space to be quirky and broad, because it's less important for viewers/players to be able to identify with them than it is to identify with the hero. However, it was really just as satisfying to dig down and find Lenneth Valkyrie's strength, fire and fuel, as it was to find Hrist's.

GF: What advice would you give someone who wants to break into the voice acting business?
MH: Take acting classes. Even though voice acting may seem easier than stage or film acting because you "just" use your voice, it's soooo not. Things you learn in acting classes, like how to build a character and making choices about what you're saying, are even more crucial in the recording studio, when there is no rehearsal time and you just have to jump in with two feet.

GF: Is there any difference between doing voices for anime/cartoons, movies or video games?
MH: When I did "Pokémon," I got to watch my character as she delivered her lines. When I did *Valkyrie Profile*, for the most part, I only had a drawing of the character and the script, which means that there's a lot more space, both to make interesting choices and to find out later that your choices were completely from Mars, and you'll have to do them over again.

GF: Is being a voice actor fun, or is it "work?"
MH: I think it's both. I'm sure it's work. It has all the signs of being work: I have to go at a specific time, I get paid (for the most part) and, most importantly, it's challenging. While I'm working, I'm fully engaged, both mentally and emotionally, and this is exciting, even thrilling. But fun? I'm pretty neurotic and insecure, so it's hard for me to let loose and have fun while I'm working (although, yes, it beats working in an office). To me, "fun" means carefree, and I'm definitely not carefree while I'm working, but, yes, it is, overall, a very enjoyable profession.





What happens when former Square developers create a *Resident Evil*-type game with turn-based combat? In short, *Koudelka* happens, but don't jump to conclusions—it isn't as good as you might think it would be.

Koudelka takes its name from the main character, Koudelka Lassant, a young psychic girl who travels to a Welsh monastery to determine the source of a ghostly vision she experienced. As the story progress, Koudelka gets closer to unraveling the hidden truth, and she teams up with two other characters to solve the mystery.

It sounds amusing enough, but the really amusing thing for me was actually trying to plod through the battle scenes while retaining what little sanity I had left. Picture the scene: You meander around, and are attacked by some unseen enemy, initiating the battle sequence. You are then whisked away to the magical land of a 6x6 grid, where your opponent(s) line up on the far side, and the turn-based *Tactics*-style (and I use that term *very* loosely) combat system begins.

Now, though *Koudelka* does boast a full complement of magic, items and weapons, most of them are extensively flawed. Each character has magic, anyway, even the ones that are supposedly floored (such as Edward) when Koudelka displays her abilities for the first time, but the spells are curiously weak and uninspired. Her weapons, particularly the melee kind (which require that players get close to a target, though actually moving anywhere behind them or to the side is nearly impossible), break with headache-inducing randomness, and are forever lost.

And unfortunately, the battle scenes are the best example of the average graphics that *Koudelka* has to offer. I won't complain about the pre-rendered backgrounds (which are decent, but how hard are they to do?), but the battle environments and the characters themselves are just bad... Sure, SNK's mastered the art of the "five frames of animation" fighter, but it's also done amazing things in the *Metal Slug* series. Yet after seeing *Koudelka*'s flickering, blurry characters tromp around a few times while listening to the quite annoying music



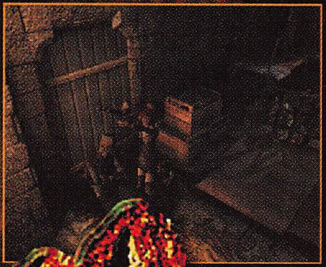


(which can't be turned off), I was reaching for the power button. "Please, spare me any further madness by keeping me away from a turn-based battle system that ascribes to no known logical progression.", I thought, but had to endure that very thing. Why some characters (either friend or foe) attack 2 or even three times in a row is as much a mystery to me as is ECM's love of '80s music <scary!>.

I will say this for *Koudelka*: Its voice acting is on par with the best I've heard, and, combined with expressive characters and high-quality CG movies, its story is well told throughout its four CDs. Whether you'll have the stomach to sit around and get all the way through them is another matter altogether...

Koudelka's mood and characters closely resemble that of Kodomo's new neighborhood (and the graphics are similar, too.)

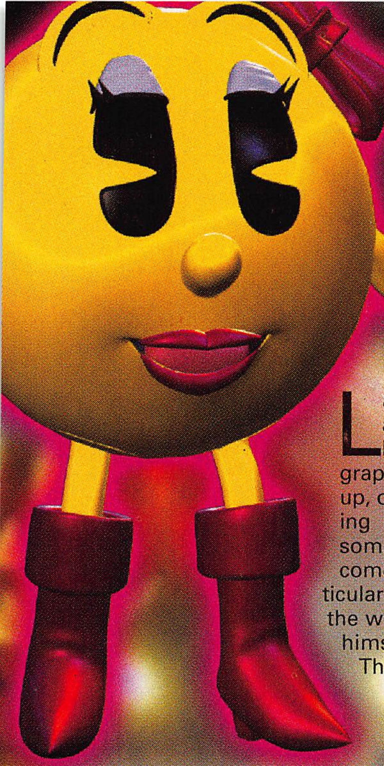








REVIEW	KODOMO: *RE* MEETS *TACTICS*? NOT WHAT YOU'D THINK...	DEVELOPER - SNK	PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	1 PLAYER	AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE :66





MS. PAC-MAN
MAZE MADNESS

Last year, Namco released the under-appreciated *Pac-Man World* on the PlayStation, and while the game's graphics could've used a little sprucing up, overall it was highly enjoyable, touting both interesting level design and some great control. GameFan welcomed the game with open arms—particularly ECM, who played the game into the wee hours of the morning and found himself with a nasty case of 'Sega Thumb.' Well, now it is I with the Sega Thumb, because *Ms.·Pac-Man Maze Madness* is an even better adventure/puzzle game than *Pac-Man World*...

Maze Madness resembles *Pac-Man World* in most respects. It's a 3D adventure hybrid that mixes the pellet eating of old with a new story line, puzzles and added gameplay features... Players munch their way through maze after maze, collecting keys, fruit and pellets as they try and avoid such critters as centipedes, mummies, witch doctors and, of course, Pinky and company.

The mechanics of the game are far removed from the original straightforward gobbler, but are as familiar as they are age-old: Manipulate scenery and devices in a quest to collect items and unlock other areas. Each level features a predetermined set of goals to fulfill in order to complete 100% of the game, which is broken down into four separate categories: time attack, score, pellets and fruit. Players earn a star for each category completed. A certain number of stars are needed to continue onto the next world, and by collecting all the stars, you begin to unlock extras, like multi-player maps.





There is some box moving and key finding involved, but the game's never tedious, and the puzzles, while they require a bit of thought, are never difficult to the point of severe obnoxiousness. The learning curve is a steady climb, and numerous checkpoints mean you never have to jump back too far when you die.

Both the graphics and the sound in *Maze Madness* will keep ya smiling. The colorful maps (which number over 150!) contain many pieces of eye candy and some nutty-looking critters. And yes, all adventuring is accompanied by the toe-tapping sounds of some very catchy music. *Maze Madness* is a happy game...

There is a downside to *Maze Madness,* though—the multi-player modes. As many as three people can participate in the various modes, but none of them are fun for more than a minute or two. They require little to no skill, and are nothing more than idle curiosities. Whether you're playing Hot Potato with a bomb or trying to collect the most pellets, the maps seem limited and the contests boring.

The good thing, however, is that you never have to play them! Just keep munching your way through the one-player game and enjoy the addictive play of one of the coolest little PlayStation titles of the year...

The Judge finds the perfectly spherical body of the little lady to be strangely alluring...









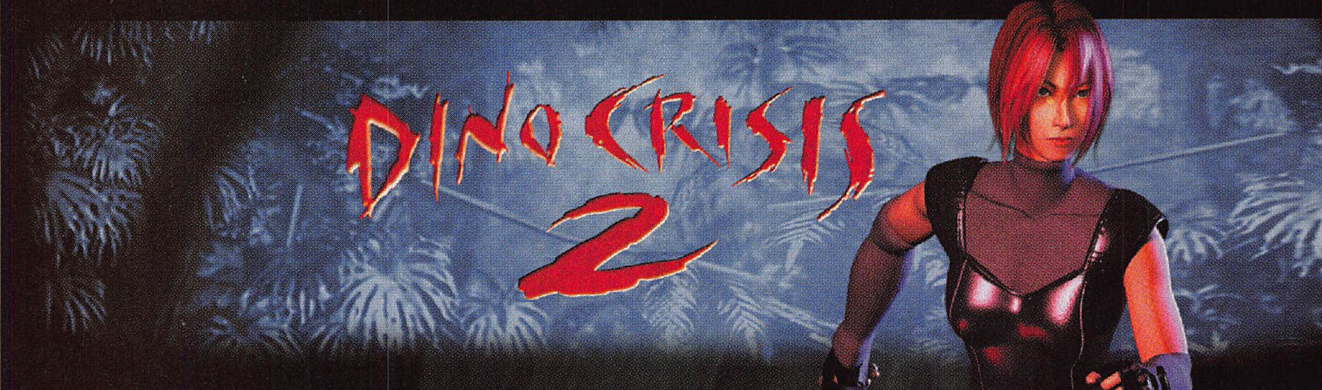




Viewpoint Score	Developer - Namco	1-4 Players	Judge: Nineteen years
:89	Publisher - Namco	Available Sep. '00	old and she still has it...

R REVIEW





Dino Crisis 2

First positive point of the day: I leave my humble abode, step over the hypodermic needles and around the lunatics that wander aimlessly through the streets of Hollywood, hit the local ATM and discover that I actually have $21 in the bank. Woo hoo! My steady diet of water, Top Ramen and ninety-nine-cent chicken potpies is put on hold as I resume my usual massive intake of caffeine and nicotine for one scant day.

It all sounds like the high point of a usually drab day, but things actually got better when I arrived at work and popped the first burn of *Dino Crisis 2* into my PlayStation. Oh, what a difference a sequel can make...

It's not tough to appreciate what Capcom's trying to do with *DC2*, even after the first *Dino Crisis* was harshly labeled as "*Resident Evil* with dinosaurs" and promptly passed over by many gamers... Yes, the two games shared more than a little in common (I'll save the pre-rendered vs. polygonal backgrounds debate for another time), but *DC* had its fair share of quality gaming.

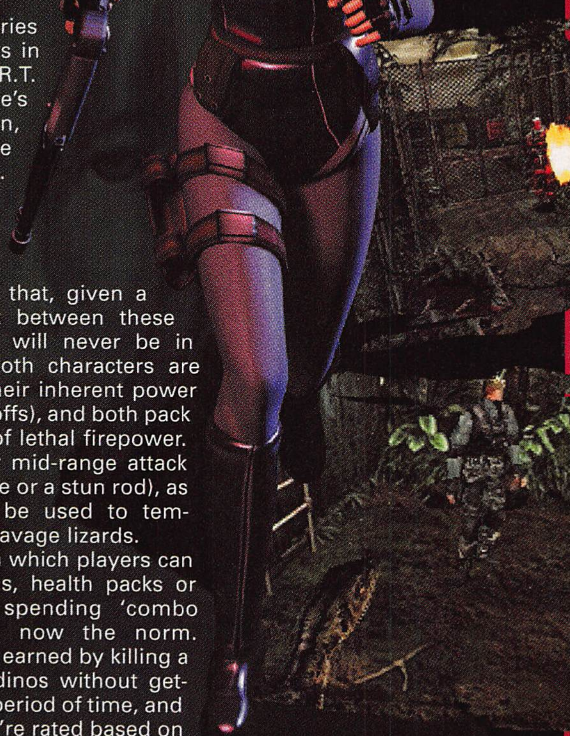
Well, fast-forward a year, and it becomes readily apparent that this isn't *DC* with minor upgrades... For the most part, Capcom's chosen to branch the game out and make it even more different than the *RE* series, thus changing the backgrounds from full polygonal to pre-rendered ones. This might sound like just the opposite (barring *Code Veronica*, every *RE* has had pre-rendered backgrounds), but it's what goes on in these backgrounds that changes things completely.

Rather than alternate between fighting scenes and puzzles (the latter actually border on 'so simple it hurts'), *DC2*'s gameplay is 100% pure action. There's no time to stop and think about how you're going to move crates to clear a path when a pack of ravenous raptors and other various nasty dinos is hot on your trail.

Regina, the series heroine, reappears in *DC2* for the S.O.R.T. team, but now, she's joined by Dillian, who works for the T.R.A.T. team. Quite honestly, all the particulars of the story aren't known as of yet, but let's just say that, given a good day's work between these two, dino steaks will never be in short order... Both characters are playable (given their inherent power vs. stamina tradeoffs), and both pack distinct arsenals of lethal firepower. Each touts a new mid-range attack (such as a machete or a stun rod), as well, which can be used to temporarily fend off savage lizards.

Virtual stores, in which players can buy new weapons, health packs or ammunition by spending 'combo points' are also now the norm. Combo points are earned by killing a high number of dinos without getting hit in a short period of time, and in each room, you're rated based on points and highest combo. It'll actually behoove you to stay around and raise the points as much as possible when you want to get that shiny new flame-thrower at the low, low price of 15,000 points...

These are but a smattering of the new features in *DC2*, which should hit the PS during the fall of this year. We'll take a deeper look into this "Jurassic Evil" game then. **K**

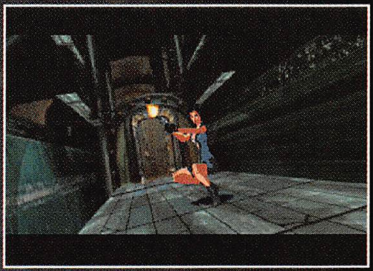




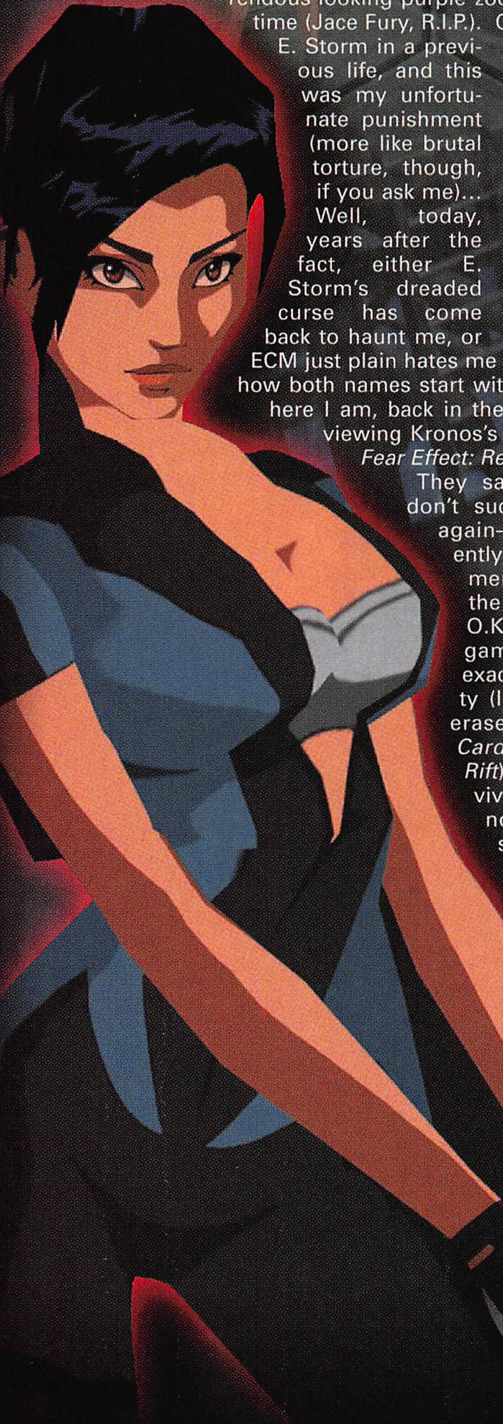
PREVIEW	KODOMO: Dino Cuisinart	Developer - Capcom	1 Player
		Publisher - Capcom	Available 4th Qtr.

fear effect

RETRO HELIX



Back during my early days of video game editing, I was forced against my better judgment (What, I'm not writing up a lame Warner Bros. cartoon game?! Something definitely must be amiss...) to preview one of the PlayStation's first fighting games, *Criticom*. The game was created by Kronos, a relatively new Pasadena developer, and it looked promising enough, but its busted control nearly made me soil the horrendous-looking purple zoot suit I donned at the time (Jace Fury, R.I.P.). Obviously, I'd wronged E. Storm in a previous life, and this was my unfortunate punishment (more like brutal torture, though, if you ask me)... Well, today, years after the fact, either E. Storm's dreaded curse has come back to haunt me, or ECM just plain hates me (hmmm, funny how both names start with 'E'), because here I am, back in the hot seat, previewing Kronos's latest offering, *Fear Effect: Retro Helix*.

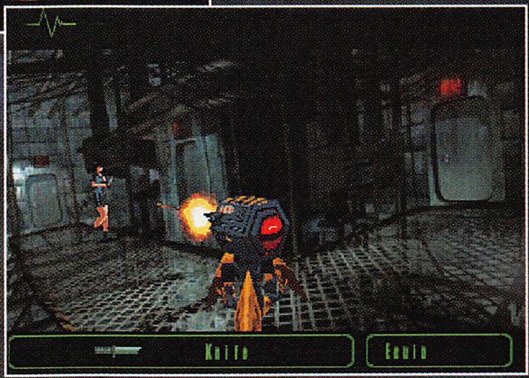




They say that if you don't succeed, try, try again—and apparently, that was the mentality around the Kronos office. O.K., fighting games weren't exactly its specialty (I think we'd all like to erase any memories of *Cardinal Syn* and *Dark Rift*), but what about survival horror? I mean, it's not like *Resident Evil* spawned a wildfire of countless clones... why not throw a few more dozen into the mix? Luckily, for Kronos's sake, *Fear Effect*'s addictive blend of brooding visuals (I think someone had their "Dark City" and "Blade Runner" rentals out a few too many nights) and mature story line landed *FE* a modest cult-like following. And while it's unfortunate that *Retro Helix*, *Fear Effect*'s aptly named sequel (er, prequel) couldn't manage an appearance on the PS2, Kronos is still hard at work pushing both the PS hardware and the game's own mature theme even further than before.



Rather than simply expanding on *Fear Effect*'s story line, the developers decided to make *Retro Helix* a prequel and answer a few questions about how Kronos' ruthless cast of mercenaries came together.



Of course, *Retro Helix* isn't just an innocent stroll down memory lane... Once again, we find Hana, Glas, Deke and, now, Rain Quin, Hana's mysterious companion, hard at work as they attempt to retrieve three separate artifacts that make up the cure to a world-threatening disease. And like the complex tale in *FE, Retro Helix*'s plot quickly becomes as bizarre and controversial as a David Lynch flick... Fans of the first game will now have to come to terms with talk of God and the true meaning of His existence—looks like the *Xenogears* cult has something to get all excited about again.





Retro Helix's visuals look slightly better than those of *FE* (overall, the game's a lot less pixelated), but that may be because Kronos appears to be spending the majority of its time on the 800+ camera angles and over 120 minutes of twisted cinemas that will appear on the final disc. So if you're slowly making your way through *Resident Evil Nemesis, Countdown Vampires* and all those other survival horror games you've been putting off, you'd best get cracking... *Retro Helix* is set to upset parents and religious fanatics alike this winter. F

DEVELOPER - KRONOS	1 PLAYER	FURY: "LET'S GO BACK,
PUBLISHER - EIDOS	AVAILABLE 4TH QTR. '00	WAY BACK IN TIME..."

P PREVIEW

BREATH OF FIRE IV











I have a confession to make. Back when I started here at GameFan, one of the first games I played was *Breath of Fire 3*. It was so slow-paced, though, that I found more enjoyment in the fishing mini-game than the game itself. *BoF3* fishing fever really caught on when Arcade Bob and I began making bets on who could catch the bigger fish, since the game recorded stats on your catches ("That's right, beeotch, 14 inches! Eat it!").

Three years later, Capcom's back with another installment to this famous role-playing series, and once again, I'm intrigued by the appeal of *Breath of Fire* fishing... Capcom's taken it to a whole new level! Yes, *Breath of Fire 4* is actually compatible with the Agetec fishing controller! Sega's *Bass Fishing*? Who needs it when you've got *Breath of Fire*??

Sadly, however, the playable version of *BoF 4* that we received doesn't feature any fishing yet, so the verdict's still out on that. It does give us a fair idea of what to expect from the final game, and it looks promising, as we journey through one dungeon and battle a single boss... but it's not exactly groundbreaking.

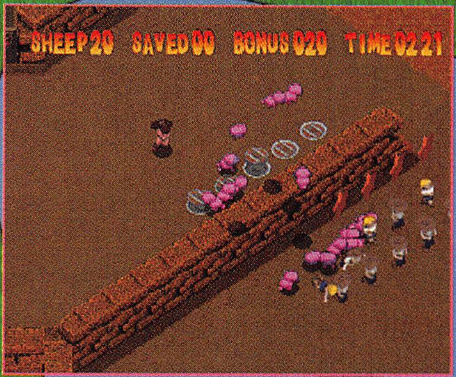
The biggest detriment that *Breath of Fire 4* faces is that all of its 'innovations' have been done before... In its "Tactical" Battle System, players can move characters between the front and back row. The ones in the back are safe from attacks, and can rest and recover magic points (similar to *Suikoden*). The "Revolutionary" Combo System creates new magic spells when multiple magic attacks are combined in the same turn, just like in *Chrono Trigger* or *Saga Frontier*, and, as in the previous *Breath of Fires*, gamers can summon or transform into dragons, which is always cool. Finally, "Player Branching" offers multiple, intersecting story lines and the chance to play as more than one character (read: "*Resident Evil* all over again").

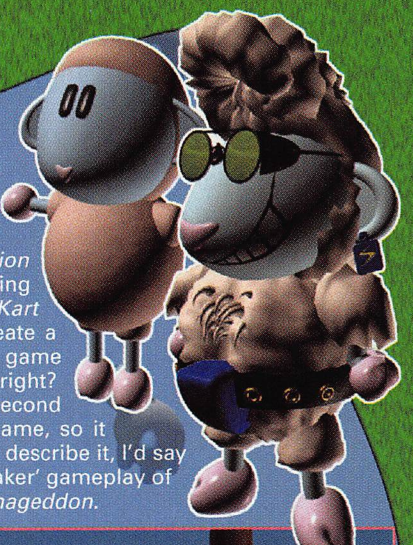
As the story unfolds, the lovely Princess Elena disappears on a routine visit to a small town in her kingdom, and her sister, Princess Nina (yes, from the other *BoF* games), sets out to discover what happened to her (though, personally, I'd consider her suspect #1... Hello?!? Line of succession, anyone?). Along the way, Nina meets Ryu, a duffel bag-toting martial artist wandering the world in search of the next big street fight... or is that some other Capcom game? Hmm... I guess we'll see when the full English version shows up in a few months. Stay tuned... and get those fishing rods ready! E





PREVIEW			
	EGGO: NOT EXACTLY A *DRAGON QUEST*... BUT IT'S GOT DRAGONS.	DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	1 PLAYER
		PUBLISHER - CAPCOM	AVAILABLE NOW

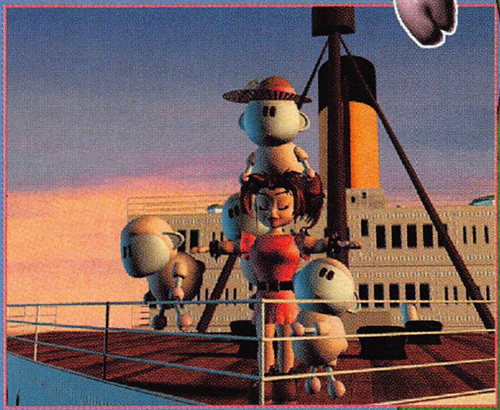




What do you do when the market's flooded with nothing but clones (kart racers, 3D platformers and racing games), sequels (*Street Fighter Hyper X: Millennium Edition vs. SNK II Alpha!*) and licenses ("We're now taking preorders for *Star Wars: Episode I Naboo Kart Racing...*")? Well, if you're Mind's Eye, you create a new genre: the flocking game. Baa humbug! A game about herding sheep? Ewe gotta be kidding, right? Nope, that's what *Sheep* is, and I enjoyed every second of it! Of course, *Sheep* is an all-new type of game, so it defies ready classification—but if you pressed me to describe it, I'd say it sports the cute visuals of *Harvest Moon*, the 'caretaker' gameplay of *Lemmings* and the outlandish humor of *Worms Armageddon*.



Players begin by picking one of four sheepherders: Little Bo Peep, Adam Halfpint, Motley or Shep (the sheepdogs). Speaking of Little Bo Peep, she's probably not how you remember her... She's the singer of a rock band now, and she's benefited from a new-age makeover. She now looks like "a cross between Björk and Courtney Love."

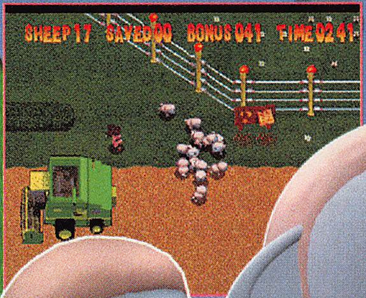


Anyway, once the player's picked a herder, it's time to gather the sheep and lead them through an obstacle course to a prescribed goal at the end of the level. Along the way, you'll have to steer them clear of obstacles such as corn sharks (that's the shark fin in the cornfield), archers (that'll pin 'em to a bullseye), rivers (sheep, like heroes, can't swim) and more.

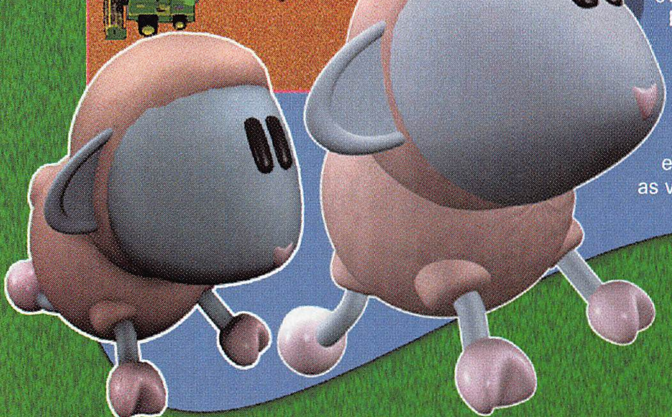


Each of the six worlds also features multiple levels and a distinct theme. In our current build, only the first two worlds (farm and medieval settings) are complete, but we've seen others, including space, nightclub and Jurassic levels, all of which look great. The game's controls are incredibly simple... Essentially, players press the Circle button to run, then press the Square button to go into action (i.e., pick up sheep, activate switches and creep stealthily)—so anyone can instantly pick up the game and play.





A large part of the reason why I'm infatuated with *Sheep* (no snide comments, Kodomo) is the humor... In this game, sheep get squashed, pierced, pummeled and more, and every one has a unique death animation. They get run through paint troughs, combines, catapults and other types of mutilating machinery; they also don strange attire such as space suits, plates of armor and burlap bags (for the sack races). There's even a random assortment of seemingly out-of-place items, like a bouncy castle, which scores points in my book [note to developers: bouncy castles are always good in a game—mine carts are not]. Finally, this game warrants a deeper look just because of its outrageous character design. My personal favorite? The most nefarious villain to star in a video game yet... <cue lightning flash>... Mr. Pear! We'll be back with more details on this evil Pear, these cuddly creatures and the mysterious black sheep as we get closer to the game's November release... stay tuned. E



SHEEP

DEVELOPER - MIND'S EYE	1-2 PLAYERS	EGGO: GREAT FOR THOSE
PUBLISHER - EMPIRE	AVAILABLE NOV '00	LONELY FRIDAY NIGHTS...

P PREVIEW

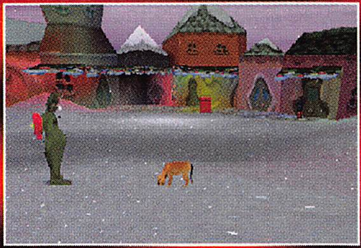
PlayStation

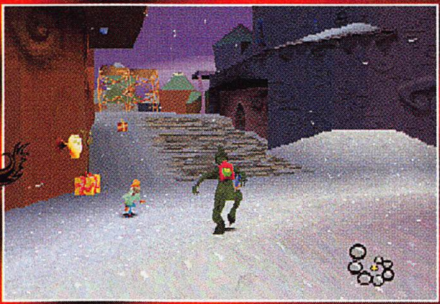


The Grinch

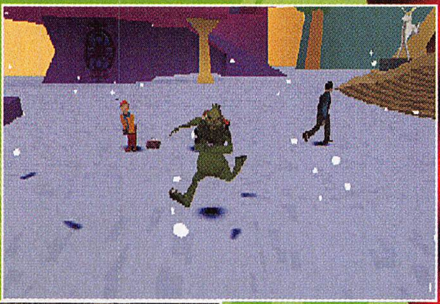
"A wonderful, awful idea..." In many ways, that's how I view this game. Back at E3, I thought Konami's booth would be overflowing with propaganda about the mob-inducing title known as *Metal Gear Solid 2*. Instead, I was disappointed to see only *The Grinch* upon entering their massive abode. What was this? Another blasé 3D platformer with a lucrative license for the masses? Without even a pause, I went on my way, passing all the Whos in Whoville and that Max-driven sleigh. A month later, however, Konami came by our offices to show us *The Grinch*, and when forced to confront this ugly green beast head-on, I was pleasantly surprised...







3D platformers have got to be one of the most tired genres in video games. Rare's practically run this dead horse into the ground single-handedly on the N64, and the PlayStation lays claim to one Spyro the dragon, so you'd better have one hell of a gimmick if you want to compete in this crowded environment. Fortunately, *The Grinch* does have such a gimmick: the anti-hero. In *The Grinch*, players assume the role of the main character (based on the motion picture coming this Thanksgiving and the original Dr. Seuss Christmas story), the evil green guy that wants to ruin Christmas for all the Whos in Whoville—funny, sounds a lot like ECM around raise time...



What that means is you get to play the ultimate prankster (a role perfect for Jim "the overactor" Carrey)... Whether smashing presents for little kids with a butt bounce or knocking over snowmen, it feels good to play the bad guy for a change. Yes, in the midst of this cute, cuddly 3D platforming world, defacing posters of the mayor and letting rats into his house is a lot more fun than it should be... Things get even more interesting, though, because the Grinch is also an inventor, which means players will have a wide variety of gizmos and gadgets to tinker with, such as the glob gun and the Grinch 'copter.





Sadly, all good things must come to an end, and Konami eventually had to leave our offices, taking the 'lovable' Grinch with them. However, you can bet we'll be back with more as November draws near... E





PREVIEW	EGGO: I MUST STOP CHRISTMAS FROM COMING!	DEVELOPER - UNIVERSAL PUBLISHER - KONAMI	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOV '00

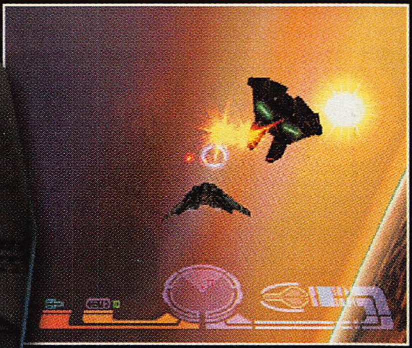


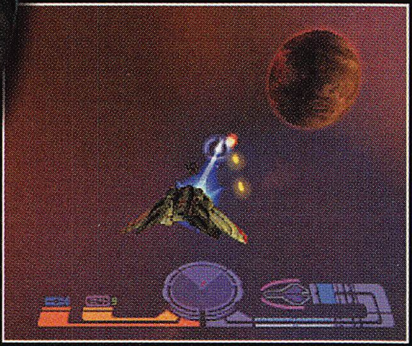
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Star Trek Invasion









JUDGE'S LOG, STARDATE 06-07-00

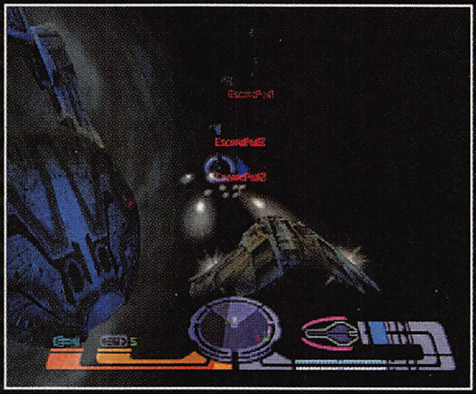
"I am at my wits' end, and the crew's getting restless... We've encountered an impassable set of training missions, which have left myself, Lt. Commander Eggo and Ensign Kodomo frustrated to no end. Our only remaining hope is that we can divert some of the remaining energy from the dilithium crystals to our engines before the core breach destroys our ship. Will Ensign Kodomo's life be snuffed out before he can even get one? These thoughts weigh heavy on my conscience..."

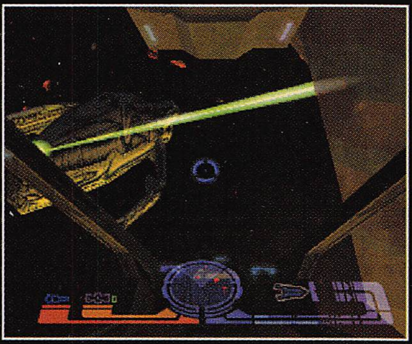
The above excerpt, taken from my personal logs, refers to the tedious set of training missions that currently hinder Activision and Warthog's newest title, *Star Trek Invasion*. The game's not yet complete, but I'll tell you straight up that if they don't fix this, there isn't a person out there that'll play it for more than an hour. Even on 'Easy' mode (which is designed for total non-gamers, in theory), it took us hours to get through all four training exercises. It might've taken a lot less time if it weren't for the fact that, if you screw up even a little, you have to go all the way back to the beginning of Exercise One. Ugh. It doesn't help, either, that there's zero room for error: Fail to get a perfect score, and it's back to the beginning. Some training...

Beyond that, however, *Star Trek Invasion* looks promising. At its core, it's a mission-based space adventure that puts gamers (as pilot "Cooper") in the cockpit of a starfighter. As the game progresses, you'll be put on different combat details, from convoy escorts and recon flights to all-out firefights. You're not alone, though... In some scenarios, players will function as part of a fighter squadron and experience space combat as part of a well-oiled machine. There'll also be an AI program implemented to emulate the cooperative nature of a flight squadron... so stay with your wingman!

The engine is impressive, boasting a good physics model, some cool graphics and a high framerate. The control's also impressive, though using the analog pad can get a bit hairy. Activision's enlisted the voice talents of Michael Dorn and Patrick Stewart, which is a nice addition... All of this aside, though, it's really hard to tell *Star Trek Invasion* apart from any of the *Colony Wars* titles, save the license. Take that any way you want.

For now, I'm going to try and get this Bijoran convoy into safe space... J

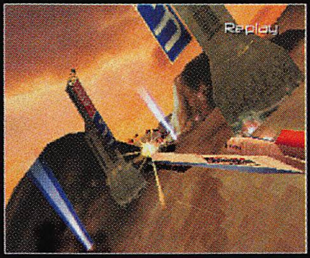






PREVIEW Judge: *Colony Trek?*	Developer - Activision	1-2 Players
	Publisher - Warthog	Available 3rd Qtr. '00







Timing is everything in video games. It can determine whether you walk away a winner, or hang your massive, pastry-shaped head in shame and say, "I was just feeling him out the first round." It not only decides which games take the top prize, but which companies, as well... Release a decent game in the shadow of an amazing one, and you've got problems. *Grind Session* has been biting at the heels of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater,* but has done little to usurp it as the king. Such is the case with *N-Gen Racing...*

First and foremost, you'll see a direct correlation between it and the PlayStation's *Wipeout* for a very good reason: Members of the original *Wipeout* team left Psygnosis to found *N-Gen*'s development team, Curly Monsters. The two games have a lot in common, but *N-Gen* differs in one key way.

N-Gen puts gamers in command of real-world airplanes to battle it out against other fliers and win various cup races. The better you do, the more money you win to spend on upgrades (such as better control, higher top speeds and the almighty Afterburner Doubler) or new planes.

Each of the fourteen tracks follows the same premise—namely, fly low to the ground through several checkpoints per lap. The main problem with this, though, is that there's no track to speak of. Barriers of light (which roughly serve as track sides) prevent players from drifting off course and initiating the slow, painful autopilot to get back on course. Miss two checkpoints, and you're out of contention, and, although you can fly high to avoid mountains, you must stay low to get the available health and afterburner power-ups. Afterburner provides a quick jolt of speed, while health repairs damage sustained by hitting mountains or being shot by opponents.

The game's AI also rates 'shaky' at best, and 'downright evil' at worst... As players progress through the four ranks of planes, they gain new weapons to slow down or destroy opponents. He who claims first place becomes the target of everyone. I found that slowing to the middle of the pack and shooting everything in sight (six planes enter, one plane leaves!) was the easiest choice. Unfortunately, at the higher levels, the computer speeds away to an early lead, and the only way to catch up is to run perfect laps and get every possible afterburner.

At the end of the day, we're left with a decent racer with a different spin, but nothing above and beyond what's already available. The game is difficult enough to keep you busy for a full weekend, and with a catchy yet repetitive Euro mix soundtrack and graphics that rate just above average, *N-Gen* is certainly worth a look or a rental.

This is not the first point in his life where Kodomo has spent a great deal of time sitting in a chair pretending to fly.









Viewpoint Score: 77	Developer - Curly Monsters	1-2 Players	Kodomo: Fly low, fast and shoot
	Publisher - Infogrames	Available Now	anything that gets in your way.

R REVIEW

COMING SOON

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

PlayStation



Blade

Developer
Hammerhead

Publisher
Activision

From comic book hero to movie franchise to video game, the vampire hunting Blade is making himself known. Let's just hope that the Daywalker is as cool on the console as he was in the comics and the silver screen.

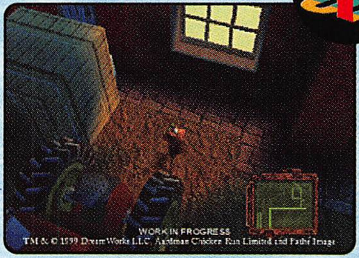


PlayStation

Mort the Chicken

Developer
And Now

Publisher
Crave



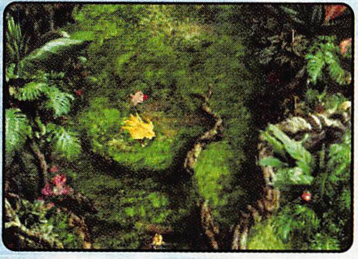


A quirky adventure title from the man who created *Ecco* and *Chakan*. *Mort* is the kind of off-beat fun that the PlayStation needs. Cluck and cackle your way through the farm, but you better watch out. The Colonel is out there!

Final Fantasy IX

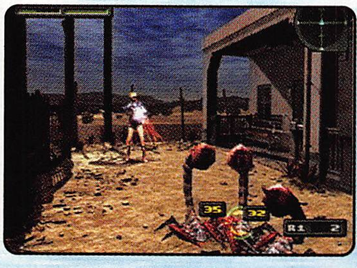
Developer
Square

Publisher
Square EA





You may have already heard of this game. It is (obviously) the sequel to the smash hit *FF8* and that has all the kids talking. While we feel that *FF7* was lacking in substance, we can always hope for the best with its successor. But don't let Eggo hear me say that.



Parasite Eve 2

Developer
Square

Publisher
Square EA

The mitochondria have reared their collective, gooey head in California and it is up to our favorite police woman to give them the slap down. More guns, more beasties and more bodies pile up in this sequel, reviewed volume 8, issue 4 as an import.



PS2

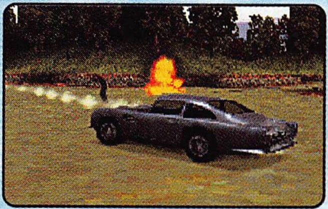


The World Is Not Enough

Developer
EA

Publisher
EA

Bond is back and he has frame rate issues. *TWINE* needs a bit of work if it expects to overcome its E3 woes, but with the power of the PS2 behind it, there is no reason it won't be one of the best launch titles out there.



PS2

Motor Mayhem

Developer
Beyond Games

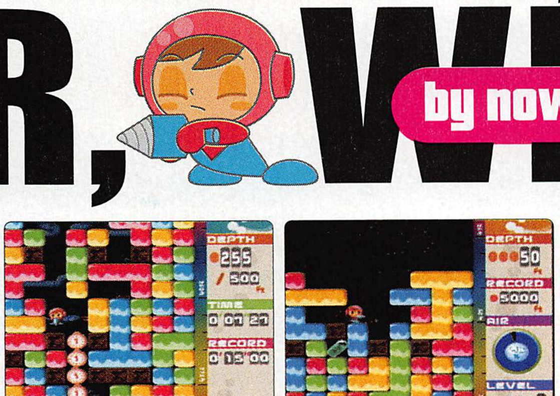
Publisher
Infogrames





Motor Mayhem is just that: motor mayhem. Fuel inject a racing combat game with the kinda juice under the PS2's hood and you have the kind of adrenaline-pumping games that will sell systems. Or it could plain old suck...





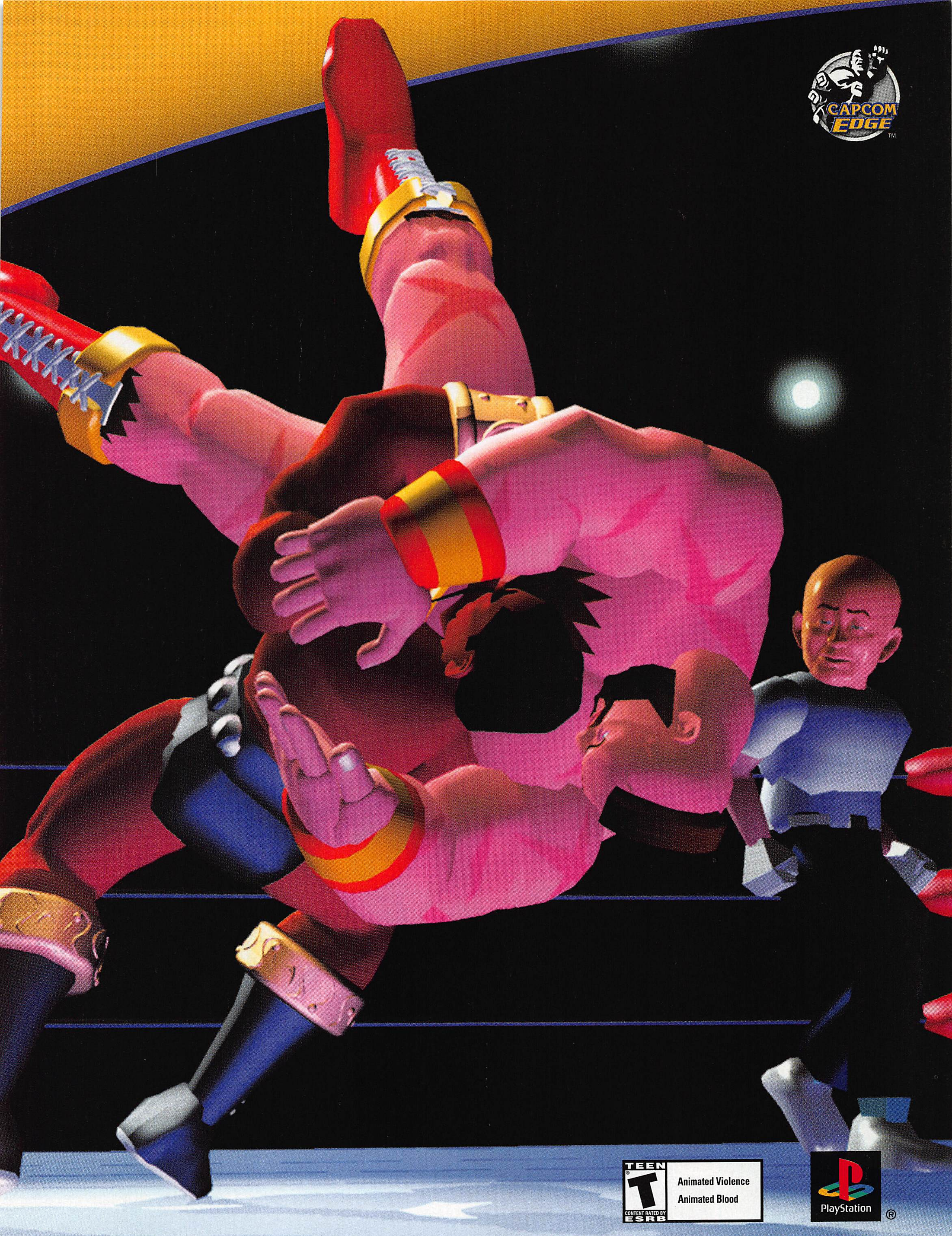
It's addictive. It's frenetic. It's a total blast! It's Mr. Driller, the pick-up-and-play puzzle game that's a hole lot of fun. Strap on your hard hat, fire up your drill and tunnel into action. Mr. Driller takes seconds to learn, yet provides years of challenge and enjoyment. Be prepared: once you start drillin' there is no chillin'!

Mr. Driller™

namco® Sega Dreamcast GAME BOY COLOR EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB PlayStation®



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CAPCOM EDGE
TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Animated Violence
Animated Blood
PlayStation

Just Go Away!

There are few series in the world of video games that truly stand the test of time. Most simply fade away (*Streets of Rage, Shinobi,* etc.), and some simply lumber on, sequel after tepid sequel, testing a gamer's patience as well as his or her wallet... The infernal *Pokémon, Final Fantasy, Tomb Raider* and *Twisted Metal* series continue on in a state of perpetual un-death, resisting the stake, sword and fire at everyone else's peril... not completely unlike a post-"Battlefield Earth" John Travolta (at level 3245 yet, John? I hear you get a Cracker Jack prize around there... one of those cool temporary tattoos). However, there are series that have, by design or by luck, managed not only to stand the test of time, but actually to advance the 'art' of video games—legends such as *Mario, Zelda, Sonic* (even he was on shaky ground before a singing, dancing 128-bit comeback) and the much more obscure but no less loved *Ogre Battle* series.









Ogre Battle 64

オウガバトル

Person of Lordly Caliber







Welcome Home, Conquering Hero

Quest's *Ogre Battle* series spawned on the venerable SNES some years ago, and though it took a crusade of Grail-like dedication to ferret out a copy, it was well worth the price to sip from its horn of plenty. Just ask the Judge, who had to play it no less than **five times** through for a strategy guide feature (alas, poor MegaFan, we knew ye... a little)... And as rare as it was then, it's even rarer now, thanks to the dreaded wasteland known as eBay, where copies randomly fetch a king's ransom.

However, Atlus, rescuer of titles from the deepest depths of oblivion (*Tail Concerto*, *Thousand Arms*, etc.), also saw fit to port the PlayStation Japanese re-releases of *Ogre Battle* and its sequel, *Tactics Ogre*, to the U.S. The only problem was that these games were long past their prime, with the likes of *Shining Force* at one end and the almighty *Final Fantasy Tactics* at the other... Thankfully, Atlus is now porting the latest chapter in the saga (well, not including the recently released, 'no chance of ever seeing it in English' *Ogre Battle* on NGPC <grumble>), *Ogre Battle 64*.

Home At Last

So, after meandering nomadically from console to console for numerous generations, the series has at last returned to its home territory on a Nintendo console... at least for the time being. A lot's been said about the feeble 2D capabilities of the N64 (with graphics that generally don't even measure up to the SNES), but *Ogre Battle 64* finally goes to show that it's wielding some serious sprite-based force, with brilliant animation on its numerous rendered sprites.

The big change since our initial preview, however, is that the game has come quite a long way since our last look, with reams of beautifully translated text—and this, apparently, is only the rough text! In fact, in its current state, it's already translated tighter than 90% of the RPGs that are currently on the shelves. If Atlus can keep up the current pace, this could very well be the best translation of an RPG (of any sort) ever...

Fingers Crossed

This will be the last time you see *OB64* in the pages of GameFan until its release toward the end of this year. There's no question that it'll be one of the N64's finest moments, and a true testament that Atlus has finally made it into the big leagues. Now, about those *MegaTen* games... **ECM**









The Trouble With Translations

You know what I'm talking about... Take, for example, the following exchange between the hero and his intrepid band of adventurers, as you'd hope an RPG conversation might play out.

Party Leader: We shall ride on the knaves and smite them with the raw fury of the storm, the blazing fire of the sun—are you with me?

Companion #1: To the bitter end, my liege—to the gates of Valhalla and beyond!

Melodrama: check! Correct usage of words: check! Relates to the character: check!

More often than not, however, thanks to any number of factors—writing ability, (lack of) skill of the initial translator, indigestion, etc.—many RPG translations end up looking something like this:

Party Leader: We shall ride on the knaves and smite them with the raw fury of the storm, the blazing fire of the sun—are you with me?

Companion #1: I like radishes—don't you?

Companion #2: I'm with you, mighty he-man—to the walls of Avondale, even beyond them, to tomorrow.

Party Leader: Aye, radishes are good... Now, to me, my brave thugs!

And that's a fairly tolerable translation. The great thing about *Ogre Battle 64* is that, even in "rough" form, the translation's already better than 90% of the RPGs on shelves right now. If Atlus just tweaks the text here and there (there's still the occasional stilted moment) and removes some of the gratuitous uses of the word "bullsh*t," it could have the most amazing translation of all time—well written **and** coherent. Who'da thunkit?

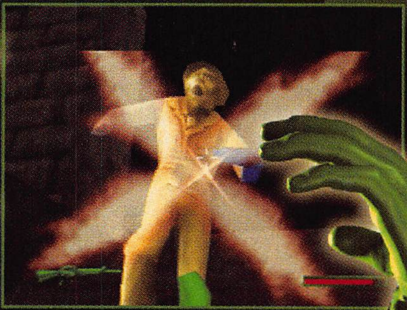
Developer - Quest	1 Player	ECM: The legend
Publisher - Atlus	Available 4th Qtr.	will never die...

UPDATE

ARMY MEN®
SARGE'S HEROES™ 2







A fiery explosion erupts over the steel-gray, battle-lit sky... a lone army man cradles his lower intestines (note: for dramatic effect, I've given my army men full human anatomy). "S—S—Sarge... uh, I can't go on." "Quiet down, Private, you're talking madness." "But Sarge <sobs>, I—I got no legs." "Son, things might be looking bleak, but your soul will live on with each *Army Men* sequel to come." "A sequel, Sarge?" "That's right, soldier, this is 3DO we're talking about... chances are, you'll wind up being recycled for *Army Men: Ocean Combat, Army Men: Kart Racer, Army Men: RPG, Army Men: Pro Skater* and, of course, *Army Men: Dance Revolution.*"

They say not to muck with a good thing, and apparently, Trip Hawkins (3DO's own "Great Oz"—pay no attention to the man behind the sequels) more than agrees with that philosophy. At the rate *Army Men* games have been selling, however, the idea that 3DO's plastic soldiers might soon invade all the different genres might not seem all that crazy... Hey, don't scratch your head in confusion—*Army Men 3D*, the title to which gamers unanimously said, "Oh, now why didn't I think of that?" has been a steady seller since it first appeared.

Hold on to your flak jackets, boys, you'll never guess what the tan baddies are up to this time on the N64... Wait a sec, does it really matter? Aside from new levels (including a pinball-inspired stage), this is essentially the same game as the original *Sarge's Heroes*. Infiltrate an enemy base here and there, take out a tank, snipe a few tans, get frustrated by some really choppy gameplay... you know, the usual *Army Men* fare. In fact, in a game like this, the story line pretty much lays there—something just to keep players entertained during loading times. At this point, if there's one thing 3DO desperately needs, it's to refine *Sarge's* control (particularly its analog sensitivity in first-person mode), framerate and, most notably, its camera, which appears to be about as competent as Private Pyle in "Full Metal Jacket." Look, regardless of how *Sarge's Heroes* evolves (featuring more weapons, bigger levels, etc. with each new chapter), it'll sell simply because it features army men killing each other. So at least make the play mechanics as solid as the license itself...

Luckily, our version of *Sarge's Heroes 2* is early, so the development team still has time to adhere to my demands (uh, sorry, I'm starting to sound like Sarge's nemesis, general Plastro). Let's hope 3DO makes a few adjustments in all the right categories and keeps the tan at bay with talk of even more sequels... bwa ha ha ha! **F**







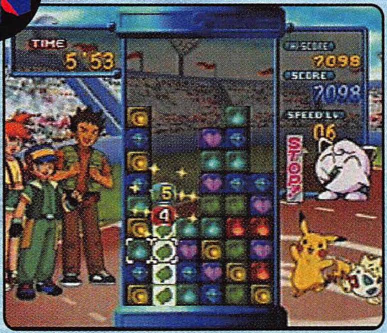


P PREVIEW	FURY: A NEVER-ENDING TOUR OF DUTY?	DEVELOPER - 3DO	1-4 PLAYERS
		PUBLISHER - 3DO	AVAILABLE AUG. '00

COMING SOON

NINTENDO64

NINTENDO64



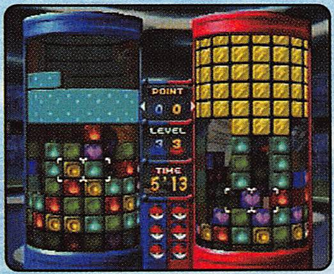
Pokémon Puzzle League

Developer
Nintendo

Publisher
Nintendo

You can play in 2D! You can play in 3D! You can use it as a non-dairy creamer! *Pokemon Puzzle League* can do so much that you almost forget it is nothing more than a hybrid of *Columns*. Connect colors in sets of three or more and create chain combos galore, which will in turn reign death on your opponent! Yeehaw!









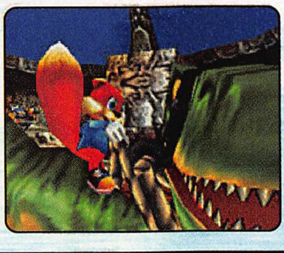


Conker's Bad Fur Day

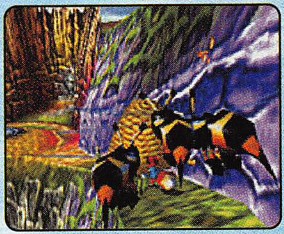
Developer
Rare

Publisher
Nintendo

The cheeky monkey, Conkers, has charmed us all with his fuzzy tail and potty mouth. Think Banjo with attitude and a lot of British humor and you have *Conker's Bad Fur Day*, to a tee.







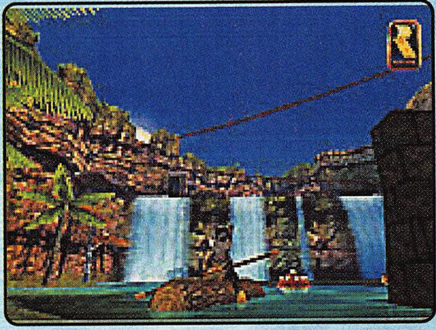


Dinosaur Planet

Developer
Rare

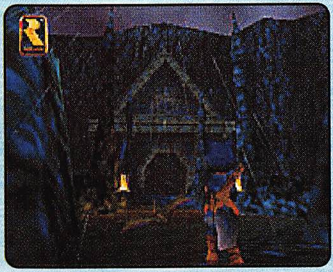
Publisher
Nintendo

When I was a kid we dreamed of getting a chance to go to Monster Island and see Rodan, Mothra and Godzilla. If you too have craved the chance to play prehistoric protagonists, now is your chance. *Dinosaur Planet* takes you to a far off land where you must combat an encroaching evil in another beaut from Rare.

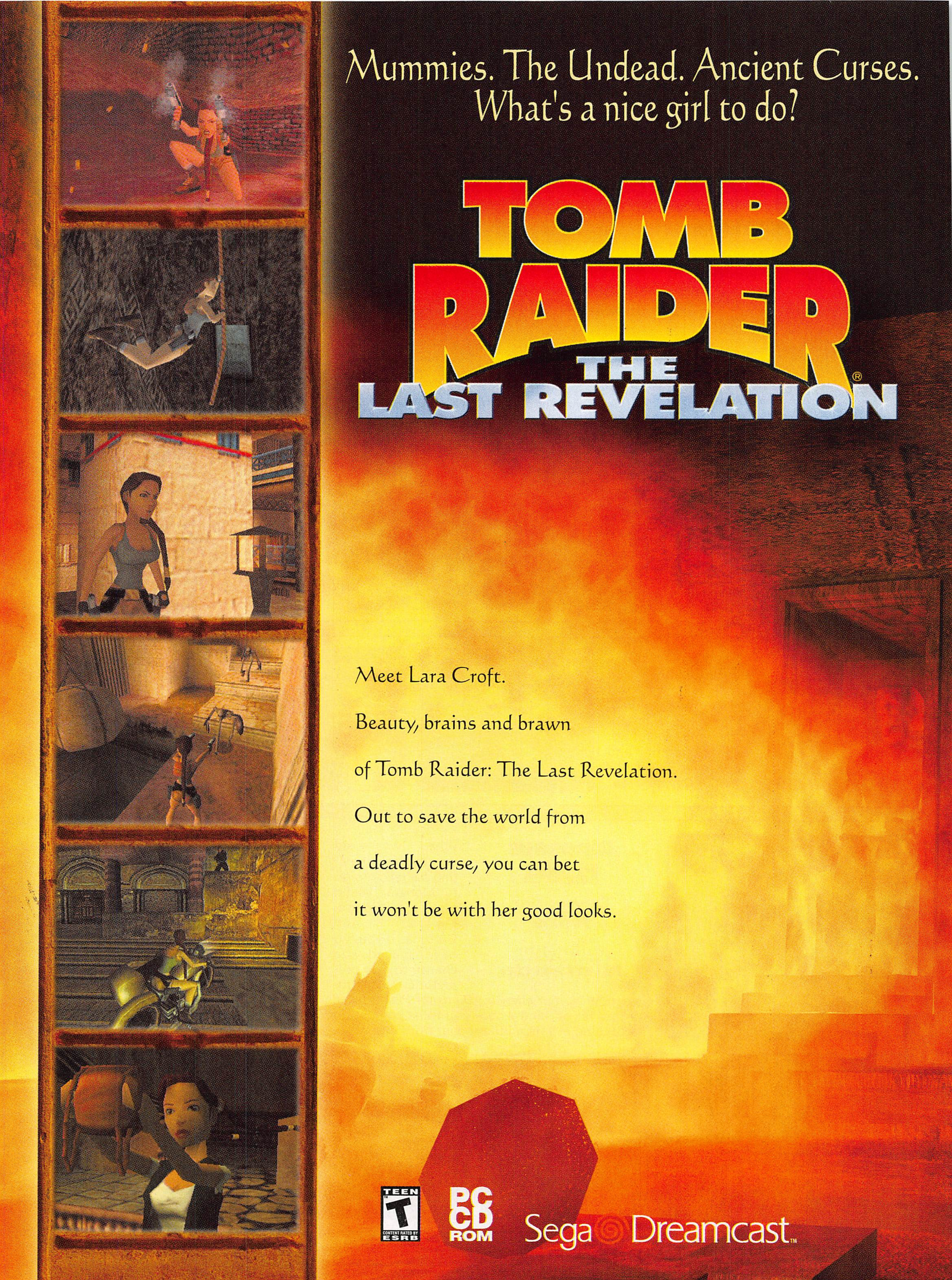












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GameFan Sports

by: El Niño

Quite frankly I expected a lot more from a *FIFA* title—especially one that was on the PS2. While *FIFA 2001* is fun to play it hardly rises above its predecessors in any department other than graphics, and even those aren't quite up to snuff.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	7	7	8	5	82

What I want to know is where is my ISS? Konami Sports have delivered a good soccer game that ranks as one of the better 32-bit experiences. I find it a little sad, though, that this title far outshines all of the Konami Sports Dreamcast efforts.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	8	7	6	5	82

One of the best games of the year, *Virtua Tennis* is a close second to *Mario Tennis* for best tennis game of all time. You do not need to be a fan of the sport to wholly appreciate one of the most satisfying playing experiences for the Dreamcast.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	9	7	8	95

Camelot cements itself as one of the foremost Nintendo game developers with this brilliant title. So perfect is the gameplay that anyone can pick up a controller and instantly be right at home on the hardcourt. Maybe the best N64 game, to date.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	10	10	7	8	98

NCAA Football has consistently been the best football game on the PlayStation, year after year. Excellent gameplay and a beefy franchise mode make this an engrossing sports title with an abundance of replayability. A must for all football fans.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	8	9	7	7	89

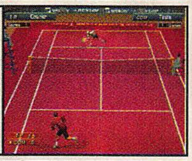
FIFA 2001
PlayStation 2
EA Sports



MLS Game Night
PlayStation
Konami



Virtua Tennis
Dreamcast
Sega Sports



Mario Tennis
Nintendo 64
Nintendo



NCAA Football 2001
PlayStation
EA Sports



Okay, so the World's game has never looked this good, but *FIFA* still is hampered by some very loose and spotty gameplay (score with anyone), combined with collision problems. The first EA foray into the PS2 realm is good, but not Earth-shattering.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	7	5	7	7	85

Amid the smoking ruin that is Konami's sports 'empire' ("50% of the worldwide market," <snicker>), there is one shining star: the *ISS* games (upon which *MLS* is based). A brilliant footy game that smashes the PS2's *FIFA* and the best PS soccer game yet.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	8	8	6	6	87

This is the 3rd best tennis game of all time (it's neighbor is numero uno, followed by the venerable *Super Tennis*). Brilliant graphics, super-tight gameplay and an uber hot 'feel,' Sega Sports comes through big -time. Now, what happened to WSB?!

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	9	6	7	93

My pick for E3 game of the show is **one of the best N64 games ever** (and you can quote me on that... hint, hint). With stunning gameplay the likes of which the tennis world has never seen, this is a candidate for Game of the Year—no joke.

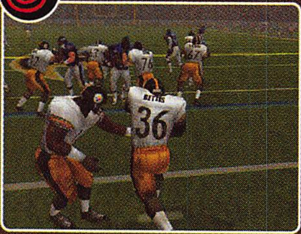
G	C	P	M	O	
8	10	10	6	8	98

I gotta hand it to them, they somehow manage to keep this game interesting year in and year out. The fact that I can sit and play through an entire season of *NCAA Football 2001*, after all of the other versions, is testament enough to its quality.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	7	8	7	7	86

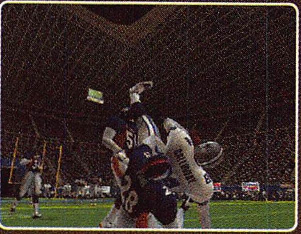
NFL 2K1 Preview (Visual Concepts/Sega)

Dreamcast





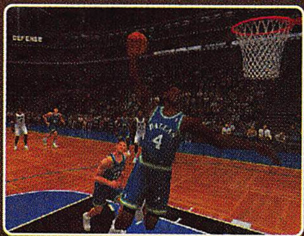


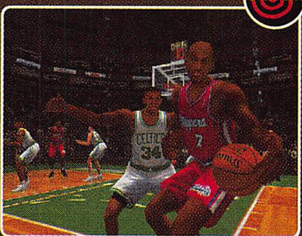


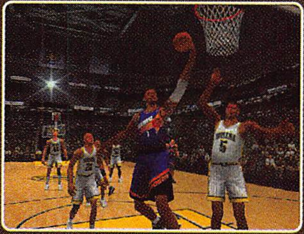


(Visual Concepts/Sega) NBA 2K1 Preview

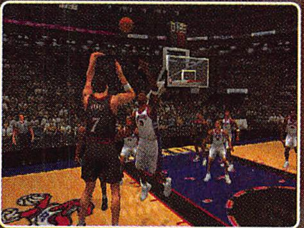
Dreamcast











Visual Concepts has been very busy with the development of this year's installments of their NBA and NFL franchises. Looking back to the release of the originals, I am still able to say that they were were both phenomenal games that suffered from only a few minor problems. With the inclusion of the SegaNet option, gamers will have the option to play people online as well as download updated rosters thoughout the season. Whether it is to augment the stats of a rookie that catches fire, or to write off some vet as a wash-up, you will now be able to play with the most accurate stats around.

Other than the internet aspect, the big addition is franchise mode. You may now play through up to ten years of any team's life, making trades, developing young talent and pushing your players towards the ultimate goal of creating a dynasty.

You should be relieved to know that almost all of the annoying little problems that frustrated gamers with the first versions, will be gone. Poor passing in *NBA* has been fixed, audio glitches have been corrected and the special moves now really are something special. Oh and by the way, you can now run the ball in *NFL2K1*!

The control of both is still quite impressive (oh the feeling of the fast break is sweet!) and while playing online, there will be little to no lag to screw up the gameplay. Going into their second seasons, both *NFL2K1* and *NBA2K1* have no equals on any machine. You really have to tip your hat to Visual Concepts. **EN**

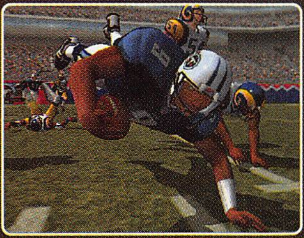
Madden 2001
(EA Sports/EA)





The PS2's most anticipated launch title, *Madden 2001* will not disappoint. Unlike many of the anti-aliasing problems which make for some unsettling graphics in other games, *Madden 2001* looks stunning. The really cool player models spring to life with the help of some astounding motion capture. Not only does it look purdy, but it plays well. Not to make cross-platform comparisions, but *Madden 2001* has gameplay comparable to that of *NFL2K1*. Not too shabby... **EN**



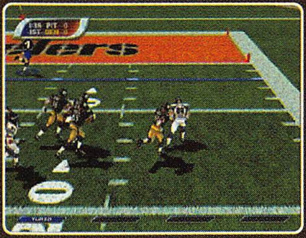


NFL Blitz 2001
(Midway/Midway)





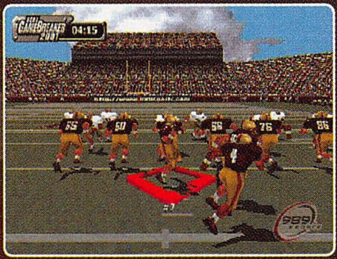
A series that needs to hang up its cleats, the *Blitz* formula has played itself out. The bone-crunching arcade fun is no less prevelant in *Blitz 2001* than in past titles, but now it just isn't as fun. Novelty gone, *Blitz* needs a serious makeover or a plot of land in the local cemetary. Will *Blitz 2001* be able to offer the consumer something new? The added plays, motion capture and updated rosters will need some extra help to make this happened. Then again, you will still be able to body-slam people... **EN**





NCAA GameBreaker 2001
(Red Zone/Sony)



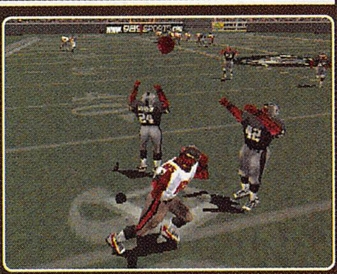


The last *GameBreaker* title on the PlayStation? Hopefully. With DC and PS2 out there, I cringe at the thought of having to play more 32-bit football titles. If this is the final PlayStation version, it is going out with style. More plays, more commentary and more features add depth to an engine that delivers some solid gameplay. Whether or not all of this will culminate in a college football experience better than that delivered by the stellar *NCAA Football 2001*, is yet to be seen. **EN**



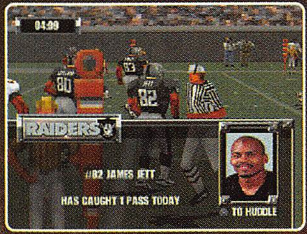


NFL GameDay 2001
(Red Zones/Sony)





Stumbling to the goal line is *NFL GameDay 2001*. It is clear that this installment, at the sunset of the platform's days, will play just as well as the *GameDays* of the past. Only problem is that little has been done to make it a big send-off. *GameDay 2001* will offer little more than what many aging sports franchises do. There will be more motion capture, more plays, updated rosters and incremental engine adjustments. Even in preview form, I can tell you that there is no reason to buy this title if you own *2000*. **EN**

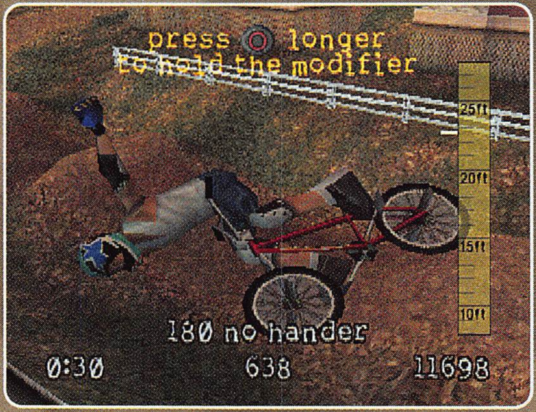


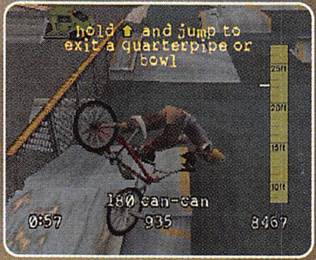


Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX

Preview

Developer: Z-Axis Available: 3rd qtr.
Publisher: Acclaim # of Players: 1-2





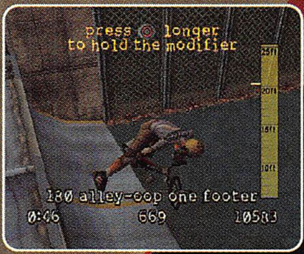


When we heard that Activision's new BMX title was going to use the Tony Hawk (aka Apocalypse) engine, we thought that this little title was dead in the water. It is using the Thrasher engine, for Pete's sake. So when we discovered how incredibly good Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX upon playing it, we were shocked. Not only is Mirra one of the most exciting, well made titles for the PlayStation (and by far Acclaim's best of the year) it just may blow by Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX, THPS engine and all.

The skate (BMX?) parks are very well designed, with tons of stuff to do tricks off of (ECM even thinks there may be too many things to jump off of) and the mechanics for pulling off stunts are simple to use, yet allow for a myriad of cool moves. A potential sleeper hit here. **EN**







Polaris Sno-Cross

Preview

Dev.: Vicarious Visions Avail.: 3rd qtr.
Publisher: Vatical # of Players: 1-2



Like in Hollywood, it seems that when a new genre of game is introduced, it is in numbers. No sooner had EA impressed us with *Sled Storm*, were several sno-cross games in the works. One of the new racers is *Polaris Sno-Cross* from Vatical.

I was quite the fan of *Sled Storm* and have been less than impressed with some of the other sno-cross titles that are in the works. Polaris, however, rises above this newly forming pack. Quite frankly I can hardly tell the difference in control from *Sled Storm* to this, but it is as clear as day that Polaris has much more vivid landscapes. This adds quite a bit of ambiance as you are churning up the snow.

All of the standard modes and features are in there, highlighted by a parts shop that allows you to upgrade all of the pieces of you sled. Looks to be anothe solid sleeper title worthy of your time. **EN**













FIFA 2001











Developer: EA
Publisher: EA
Available: Fall
of Players: 1-2

Review

Okay, I think it's established that I'm the resident football (a.k.a. "soccer" to the uneducated masses) fanatic here at GameFan... What isn't known, however, is that I haven't actually bought a soccer game since *FIFA '96* on the PlayStation (my last purchase before that was even further back—3DO's *FIFA '94*). Frankly, there just haven't been many football games that deserved a purchase. The gaming sports world is rife with laziness (trust me, I know a great deal about *that* subject) when it comes to annual upgrades—but how does a new system handle the old game?

Well, it comes as no surprise that Electronic Arts has spent the majority of its time on the graphics and amazing look of *FIFA*. This is the PS2, after all... Whether it's the rendered polygonal players (who all resemble their real-world counterparts), the stadiums or the uniforms, which bear actual sponsors' logos (minus the "Sega" and "Dreamcast" Arsenal shirts, hmmm...), every detail is accurately replicated. Motion-captured goodness abounds, as well, and culminates in one of the best-looking football games to date.

The graphics are so good, in fact, that they almost mask the problems that still plague the game. Watch an instant replay of almost any segment of action, and you'll actually see players periodically run through opponents. This nonexistent collision detection is a little hard to spot when playing the game, which can be chalked up to the speed of the action or the distant views, but is undeniable in the close views.

Passing the ball is as easy as ever with the current indicator that shows good/maybe/bad passes, but getting players to run on to the ball isn't so simple. Make a run downfield and pass the ball to an open man and, instead of running to the space and staying ahead of the defender, he'll stop to collect the ball and slow the pace of the action. Players also have no control over the shots that they take beyond the "shoot in penalty box and score, shoot from outside and miss" mantra that's become synonymous with *FIFA*...

When all is said and done, the game stands tall as the best sports game on the PS2, but that isn't a very powerful statement. There just aren't a lot of sports games on the system yet. The game features five of the world's top leagues, though, as well as World/Under 23 Cup challenges and a create-a-team feature, so it's not the worst way to spend a weekend or two. It's definitely worth a rental (or a purchase, if you bleed football like I do). It just doesn't do enough to break the mold of sports gaming that was pioneered back in the 16-bit days... **Kodomo**





Virtua Tennis

Dreamcast

Developer: Sega
Publisher: Sega

Available: Now
of Players: 1-4

R Review

I never thought I'd write stellar reviews for two tennis games in one year, let alone one issue... The days of reminiscing about SNES *Super Tennis* are over. Yet here we have *Mario Tennis* on the N64 and *Virtua Tennis* DC, which has single-handedly come in and annihilated the tennis titles of the recent past, leaving me relieved... and asking the question, "What took you guys so long?"

What makes video tennis such a popular phenomenon is beyond me. I hold a particular love for watching the sport whenever the big events are on (women's included), but I'm perplexed that people are always hungering for another tennis game. Maybe this hunger sprouts from the ancestral memories we all of have of *Super Tennis*, or maybe not. Actually, I really don't care. All I know is that the genre of tennis was in dire need of a good title, and now we have two.

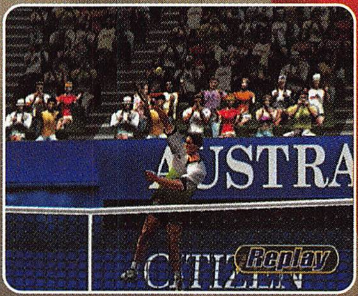
Yes, *Virtua Tennis* adds a bit more realism and depth to the genre. Not only is it a paradigm of gameplay and design, but it also has the kind of depth and realism that'll satisfy sports game fans. Eight pros lend their talents to it, and while players will find no licensed tournaments (you're not going to see the French Open or Wimbledon here), they'll participate in worldwide singles and doubles tournaments against the likes of Courier and Pioline.

Gamers and their friends can participate in frenetic multi-player singles and doubles matches, but flying solo in *Virtua Tennis* is also quite enjoyable (something you can't say about too many sports titles)... As you travel from tourney to tourney, earning money, you must participate in training exercises that ease you into the techniques required to beat the more advanced computer opponents. You'll inevitably drub the first couple of guys you face, but competition will quickly become increasingly difficult, and learning the proper way to lob, return serves and aim shots will be imperative. This is what the training mode's for.

Play through matches and training exercises, and more exercises, arenas and pro shops will become available. Players can buy even more playable pros, clothes, upgrades and stages in the pro shops. Take the prize money you've accumulated, and purchase these things at your leisure. The only time purchases are really required is in the beginning, when you must pick up a doubles partner.

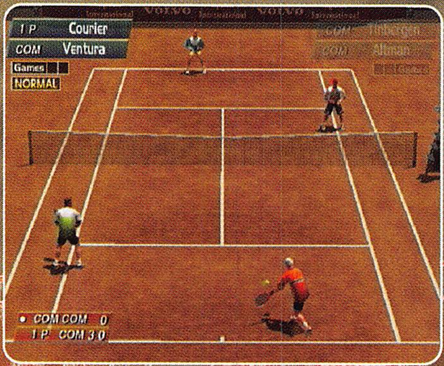
Virtua Tennis is an absolute must! If you own a Dreamcast and are looking for a game that's equally enjoyable for a single player or parties, this is the one. This office has caught tennis fever, and my thumbs may never recover. Long live Sega Thumb! **EN**



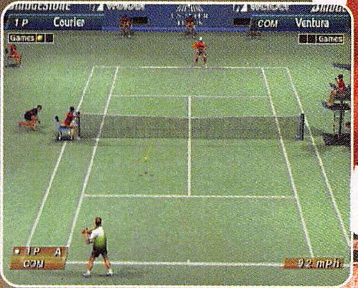




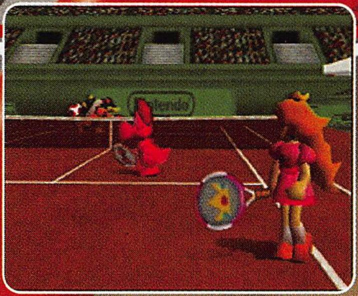








Mario Tennis











NINTENDO 64

Developer: Camelot **Available: Aug**
Publisher: Nintendo **# of Plyrs: 1-4**

R Review

Six hours and some serious Sega Thumb later, I'm taking a breather from my pick for the best Nintendo game of the year—maybe of the system's life. *Mario Tennis* is without a doubt one of the all-time best multi-player games I've ever played, and as I write this, I'm fiending to get another crack at it...

The game's excellence is really no mystery, though: Camelot, the brilliant group behind *Hot Shots! Golf*, *Mario Golf* and *Shining Force 3* produced it. The people at Camelot are masters of great gameplay, and they've outdone themselves in *Mario Tennis*, delivering a title with such perfect control and playability that it rivals the best of the best.

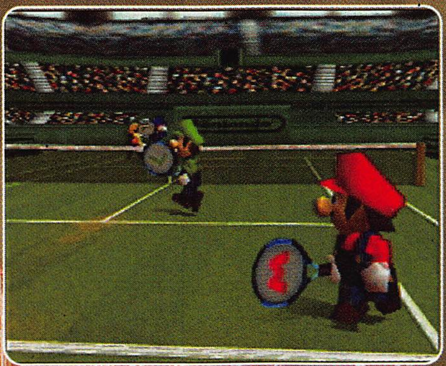
To picture the game, you need only think of *Mario Golf* with tennis rackets. The character design is much the same, as are the mechanics and gameplay modes—so if you're not engaged in some feverish multi-player action, you can always bide your time (and possibly unlock secrets) tackling various modes of play, collecting rings, volleying against multiple computer opponents and playing through the tournament mode.

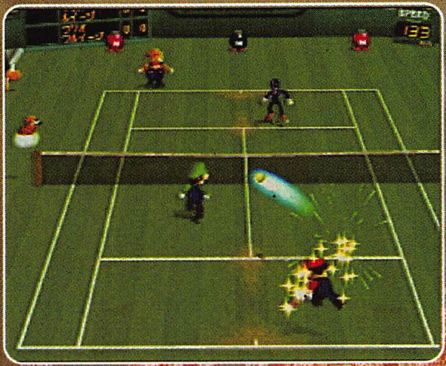
Realistically, the modes of play are nothing exceptional, and resemble many of the previous Nintendo products. What takes *Mario Tennis* and elevates it above those other products, though, is the aforementioned gameplay. The control is so precise, and the learning curve is so perfect that you'll be a competitive player from the second you pick up the controller, but will need many hours to become a true tennis pro.

This game puts Camelot in Rare's league.

Camelot's also found the perfect balance of realistic tennis action and necessary "cheating" elements to eliminate any annoying or frustrating aspects... The surface area of the racket and the players' ability to get that racket on the ball have been buffered just enough so that you needn't go crazy trying to return volleys (ugh, the horrible memories of tennis games past still haunt me, with the exception of SNES Super Tennis, an awesome title). In fact, the ease of play will result in some wild (and very tense) volleys that can last minutes (yes, minutes!).

Take all of these elements and add them to a game of doubles, and you have some of the best laugh-out-loud multi-player mayhem of any game ever... better than any EA Sports game could ever muster. As a Nintendo 64 owner, I've never encountered a game that was so absolutely necessary to own. **EN**





EUROPA

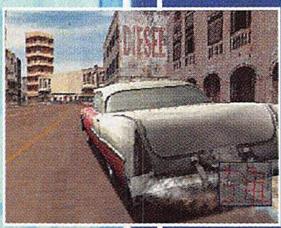
Moho **_developed by: Lost Toys_**





Moho is (presumably) not a game involving hitting corners with Lolos, but is rather the project name for Lost Toys' very first game, which is set to be published by Rockstar/Take 2 Interactive later this year, and which Europa tackled way back in the February issue. These first early screen shots from the PlayStation version certainly show the distinct style of the graphics, but don't convey the game, which is a bizarre mixture of action and skateboarding-like dynamics... In it, gamers play a criminal who must take part in gladiator-like contests in arenas full of curved surfaces and ramps, which the player negotiates on a rollerball-like machine. Strange and very British, yes, but most likely fun.

Driver 2: Cruise Control?



When *Driver* was released back in the summer of 1999, it debuted to an ecstatic reception. Naturally, a sequel was certain to follow, but Reflections knew it would be difficult to improve on the first game... So with a dedicated team almost twice as big as the original team and a lot of effort, Reflections came up with improvements. Sure, *Driver 2*'s gameplay would undoubtedly be similar, but with a few marked differences...

Tanner, the eponymous hero of the game, can now wander out of his car at selected points. Reflections has yet to get this part of the game running properly. It will have to be limited to pressing a few switches and switching cars. That's right, switching cars... Tanner's not bound to a single car anymore. At several points in the game, he can step out and grab another car, *GTA*-style. Which leads me to another improvement—the new vehicles, which include ambulances, stretch limos and even school buses. Imagine you're out of your car, and your target switches from his demolished vehicle to a speedier means of transport. You see a few different vehicles, ahead, including a bus right next to you, but farther down the road is a faster piece of American machinery. Hop on the bus, and you can start the chase immediately—but needless to say, the yellow school bus ain't exactly made for high-octane car chases. It'll have to do, though, because if you run toward the speedier car, you run the risk of giving the criminal you're supposed to catch a sizable head start and failing your mission. It sounds tricky, but Reflections decided the driving formula worked so well the first time around that *Driver 2*'s foot action would be limited. Around 85% of the game will still take place behind the wheel.





Tanner won't be able to leave his car at will, though. Reflections' Creative Director Martin Edmondson argues convincingly that this would simply detract from the car chases, and would be a nightmare to solve for the designers (not to mention for the programmers that have to cope with the six-year-old hardware). Reflections admits that it's difficult to improve the game's technology, even with a dedicated programmer whose sole task is to optimize its AI code via Sony's Analyzer kits. AI and a lot of other engine improvements have been made under the bonnet, so to speak.

While it's not quite curve rendering, Reflections is including curved roads, something that the original game didn't feature. Few people ever realized that they were missing (though those 90-degree turns on the bridges felt a bit unnatural), but it's something that helps *Driver 2*'s designers create a variety of more natural-looking cityscapes. The first thing that players will notice is that the exit ramps now lead off the main roads, and must, of course, be used to access the highways.

So where will Tanner burn rubber this time around? He's exhausted most of the trademark U.S. cities, so Reflections decided on the exotic Havana (with several twisty forest roads, taking full advantage of the curved-road technology) and Rio de Janeiro. Chicago and Las Vegas will represent the U.S., the latter complete with a massive desert area. Reflections' art department's traveled to each city, taken thousands of photos and countless hours of video footage (all in the name of research, of course)... During the visit at the studio, they showed us a few real city and in-game shots for the sake of comparison. The end result isn't quite *Metropolis Street Racer*, but Reflections has managed to include some very impressive and detailed textures and buildings already in this early stage of development.

The concentration on visuals continues with lavish CGI sequences, complete with motion-captured movement, which demolish the blocky efforts of the first *Driver*. A larger variety of pedestrians middle around *Driver 2*'s streets, as well, and they sport much more animation than ever before. It's a shame you still can't hit them. The plot is naturally something that Reflections doesn't want to talk about too much at this early stage, but efforts are being concentrated on making it less convoluted and more tightly interwoven with the action.

Between E3 and my visit to Reflections, I've played the E3 demo of the game for quite a few hours, and I'm rather confident that it'll be a worthy sequel to an excellent game. It won't be markedly different, nor will it carry the freshness of the original, but it's encouraging to see Reflections put so much effort into a sequel while everyone else is gearing up for full-on PS2 development (which is not to say that Reflections *isn't* deep into next-gen development). *Driver 2*'s rather smart ad campaign will begin soon, and will be in full force when the game becomes available in November.

"It's amazing, actually, how easy it is to produce very bad code on the PS2..."

Driver 2

"Bullitt," "The French Connection," "Cannonball Run," "Ronin"—these are just a few of the movies stacked on Reflections' overflowing DVD/video shelf at its cramped demo room, where GameFan is sampling the Newcastle developer's current project, *Driver 2*. Each of these films contain spectacular car chases that have inspired both the original *Driver* and its sequel, which is only planned for the PlayStation... and if you must know, according to project manager Gareth Edmondson, "Ronin" is one of the team's favorites, with its old-school car chases directed by none other than veteran filmmaker John Frankenheimer.

Reflections has gone through plenty since your correspondent's last visit in early 1999. *Driver* became the biggest-selling PlayStation game in the U.S., and with the not-too-inconsiderate profits made from it, Reflections has almost doubled in size, at least when it comes to floor space at its quiet HQ. Only six people worked on *Destruction Derby*, and after the acclaimed sequel, Reflections lay low for almost three years, quietly adding to its staff. Then, at the end of those three years, it emerged again with *Driver*, which, despite its million-selling status, couldn't help GT Interactive from going down under.



GAMEFAN INTERVIEWS

Martin Edmondson

Creative Director, Reflections Interactive

GameFan: How did you end up using these cities for the sequel?
Martin Edmondson: I think what we wanted to do was definitely to keep a U.S. feel to the game. We were keen not to do some of the obvious choices, you know, *Driver 2* in London and Paris... You can argue that it would've been a good idea to do that, but opinions are divided, and in the end, we decided to go for cities with a U.S. feel so we could keep the big U.S.-style cars with over steering. But I was also adamant that we did not want to base the game entirely in the U.S., again because there simply weren't enough interesting towns left. We did them all in *Driver*, and when you start looking at other cities like New Orleans, Seattle, Washington, they're all great cities, but from a European point of view, they're not that interesting; don't have the pull-factor that would make you want to go there or notice them on TV. But Chicago and Vegas are different, being signature cities, and South American ones because of their gritty nature... Havana and Rio both have that gritty possible-undertones-of-crime feel to them.

GF: Those cities are certainly a lot different than the U.S. cities last time around. Is that mainly due to the sequel engine's capability to create curved roads?
ME: It allows us to be much more interesting. Yeah, even if we would've had curved roads in *Driver*, we hardly would've used them, since there are very few curved roads in the U.S. But in Havana, you can drive through the forest, and even the city itself has curvy and twisty roads, so you know for us that made it much more interesting to build, and it's much more visually interesting. And it's interesting for the U.S. citizens since they cannot fly to Havana due to the trade embargo. They're hopefully interested to see how things look there. So it's a bit of a mixture of the traditional *Driver* and something interesting, not the obvious European route.

GF: The two-player support is something new...
ME: Yeah, we designed a special city for it. We can't run two players in the main big cities, so we designed a special city for it, which is the size of the South Beach area of *Driver*. It really is driving games, racing type games and checkpoint type games—*Destruction Derby*-style games, simple cop chase modes so you're not playing missions. Because we cannot build the environments to the size of the true cities, we cannot really have useful missions in there. If you would drive from A to B in two-player, it would be over in twenty seconds (due to memory constraints). It just wouldn't be long enough... it's just a little nice addition, really, rather than being something that game revolves around.

GF: Reflections apparently won't do a PC port of *Driver 2*. Does this mean it'll concentrate solely on consoles, as it's largely done in the past?
ME: No, we won't do a conversion... We've done a PC version of *DD2* and *Driver*, but our experience is better suited for consoles and console game players. I don't play PC games myself, but I do play console games when I get a chance.

GF: With that in mind, will Reflections support the X-Box?
ME: We will support anything that is commercially viable and that is an interesting machine for us to work on. X-Box definitely falls into that category.

GF: And the PS2, I suppose, as well.
ME: Yes, we are already working on it.

GF: Any word on what title? *Driver*?
ME: It's likely that there will be a *Driver* for PS2 at some point, but not this year, for sure. We're working on something else on the PS2 (a game that involves cars, definitely), but it's very early in development.

GF: During the presentation, you mentioned the continuous optimizing of code. Do you see this as something the PlayStation 2 can take to the next level with its open-ended architecture?
ME: Well, yeah. The first games are quite simple, but the second generation will be far more impressive... but third-generation, I think there will be some really spectacular stuff coming out when people really know how to use the machine, really get their heads around it. Then we will get into the whole optimizing thing, and the potential—I'm really quite excited in five years what's the ultimate PS2 game like. When you compare *Ridge Racer* to *Ridge Racer IV*, the difference is almost night and day—it's the same machine.



GF: And this on the PS2, which, early on, many people said couldn't be optimized too much.
ME: Yeah... I remember when *RR* and *Toshinden* came out, and I remember reading serious comment in the press, with people saying, "I really don't think the games can get much better than this." It's amazing, isn't it... it's such a simple machine to program, as well. It's like the Amiga situation, where you've got people coming out four, five, six years in the machine's lifespan and coming out with incredible things...

GF: But do you think (since it'll take so much time to optimize and get the best results from the PS2) many smaller developers will simply go over to the X-Box, which is in theory a lot simpler?
ME: Yes, probably. Certainly, the PS2 will sort the good teams from the poor... It's amazing, actually, how easy it is to produce very bad code on the PlayStation 2. You can produce a game that looks visually inferior to a crappy PC/Dreamcast game that's been not particularly well programmed. It's amazing.

GF: Are you still developing *Steam*?
ME: No, we are not... *Steam* started off as a technology experiment into these kinds of *Quake/Doom* type of games, and we developed a lot of the graphics and started developing an engine for it. But in the end, we decided that, since there's so much competition in that area, and we are good at driving games and we can generate huge sales with driving games... *Quake* and *Unreal* sell very well, but there are many games in that genre that don't sell.

Special Thanks to Mr. Edmondson and all the folks at Reflections Interactive.

Japan Now!









Dragon Quest 7 (PlayStation)

Ascii's little known surfing game was shown on only one monitor at the Spring TGS, but now that the expected August release date is closing fast, *Surfroid* info abounds. Using the standard surfer moves (such as Cutback and Aerial), expect to rip some waves on your PlayStation 2 this Fall.

Japan Now is brought to you by *Kodomo*









Grandia 2 (Dreamcast)

Okay, you already know that *Grandia II* is coming to Dreamcast (strategically sandwiched between the release of *FFIX* and *DQVII*), but you might now fully appreciate a good DC RPG. Forget *Climax Landers* and *EGG*, and get ready to praise Game Arts for *Grandia II* on August 3rd.



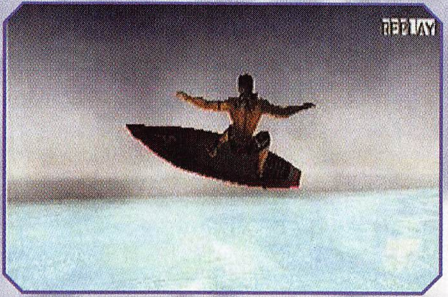


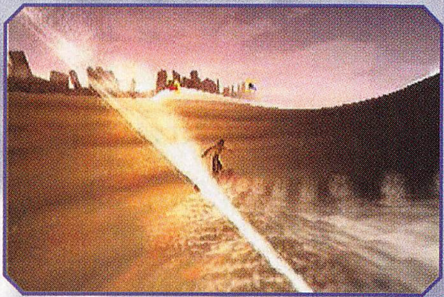


東京バス案内

Tokyo Bus Guide

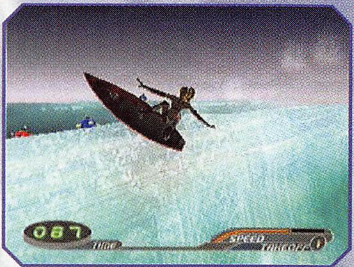
Based on the already released DreamCast game, *Tokyo Bus Guide* is the latest addition to Sega's 'real-life' arcade simulations. No chance you'll see this game on these shores, but here's a look at the bus-inspired cabinet.





Surfroid (PlayStation 2)

Ascii's little known surfing game was shown on only one monitor at the Spring TGS, but now that the expected August release date is closing fast, *Surfroid* info abounds. Using the standard surfer moves (such as Cutback and Aerial), expect to rip some waves on your PlayStation 2 this Fall.









Dynasty Warriors 2 (PlayStation2)

Koei hit paydirt in Japan with *Kessen*, selling as many copies as Namco's *Tekken Tag Tournament*. Next up on the strategy table is *Dynasty Warriors 2*, which will give you the chance to play down in the action, slashing away at the masses. We'll (hopefully) have more on this game in the very near future.

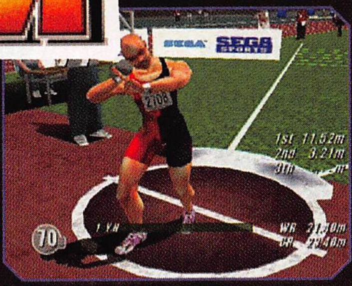







Sega Sports Virtua Athlete 2K

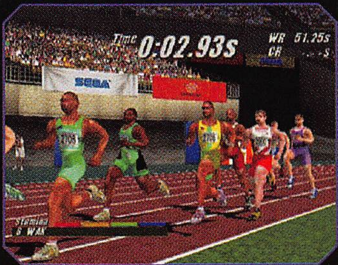
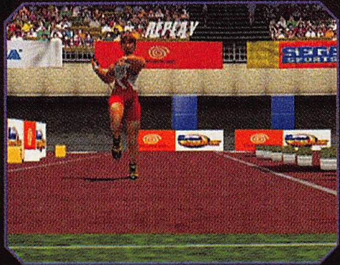




Just in time for the Sydney Olympics, Sega of Japan will release *Virtua Athlete 2K* during July in Japan. Featuring a wide variety of track and field events, up to 4 players can compete against one another and go for the gold. Of course, you'll be able to custom create characters and choose from a healthy selection of national sides.





Jet Set Radio



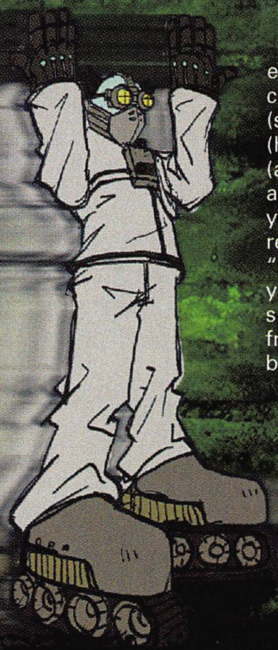
Warning! Sega does not condone behavior such as jumping over railings and spray painting helicopters in mid-air, blinding pilots and causing crashes. The company also doesn't want you grabbing the bumpers of moving cars while skating on pairs of roller blades... Juvenile behavior such as bowling over police officers and hopping moving cars will not be tolerated—O.K., it's encouraged! In short, Sega's captured the spirit of today's youth, a generation raised on MTV and wrestling. It's embraced that wild unpredictability, and given gamers the chance to get out their aggressions, all in one game—*Jet Set Radio*. What can be better than knocking over policemen and evading arrest by jumping across a rooftop? How 'bout slamming into a rival gang member as he spray paints a wall, taking his spray paint and retagging said wall as your turf? In *Jet Set Radio*, almost anything's possible—you can go anywhere, do anything and create makeshift combos using the surrounding landscape (like a simplified *Tony Hawk Pro Skater*).



The gameplay's a lot like *Tony Hawk*, as well... Players are given full range of movement in a small area of urban "Tokyoto." There are classrooms, schoolyards, downtown areas, sewers and junkyards to explore. Grind across rooftops, switch to telephone wires, do a front flip onto an awning and, finally, hop onto the roof of a bus. All these acrobatics will be necessary, too, because you have to scour the city in search of spray paint cans, which are tucked away in high places where only the most nimble in-line skaters can reach.

Imports

Reviews



Speaking of skaters, *Jet Set* presents quite a variety to choose from. There's Beat (the hip, default character), Gum (the cool-looking female lead), Kon (sporting a ski cap pulled over his eyes), Combo (hauling a beat box around on his shoulder) and Cube (a goth chick), to name a few. Choose an initial character, and whenever you meet a potential recruit for your gang (the GGs), he/she will challenge you to repeat a sequence of moves (like the basketball game "Horse"). Then, if you can pull it off, he/she will join you. It's a training mode of sorts. These training missions before each level are actually harder than the free-roaming game itself, though, which is good, because the rest of the game is actually rather easy.



Visually, *Jet Set Radio* sets a new precedent in video games with its heavy use of "Japanese monkey magic" (i.e., cel shading... the technique that produces those cartoony cutout graphics). If this programming trick is duplicated over and over like the gratuitous lens flare, I probably won't mind, because it's very stylistic, and harks back to the days of 2D goodness.

As for the soundtrack, it's one of the best I've heard in a long time, especially for a non-music or role-playing game. The beats are a healthy mix of hip-hop, techno and J-pop. Combine that with the devastating visuals, and you have a one-two combination that'll floor even the most jaded reviewer. Fortunately, the gameplay's sound as well, and rounds out the ultimate package.

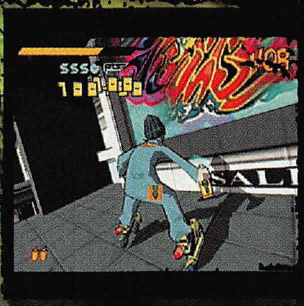




Granted, there are some minor problems with it, such as the occasional slowdown and pop-up when too much action erupts on-screen. The loading screens are pretty lengthy by Dreamcast standards, too (though not as bad as those of *Frame Gride*). Ultimately, *Jet Set*'s biggest problem is its lack of depth... Its trick system isn't as deep as *Tony Hawk*'s, so the game doesn't have as much replay value or longevity. There are a few gimmicky features, such as the ability to import pictures or hand-draw your own graffiti, but I still question whether I'll be playing this game in three weeks. I'd advise holding out until the domestic release *(Jet* Grind *Radio)* sometime in October before tuning into *JSR*...

Eggo, no stranger to roller blades, doesn't like getting plowed by a truck, as is often the case when he picks up the controller.





Viewpoint Score :90	Developer - Sega	1 Player	Eggo: Smells	R Review
	Publisher - Sega	Available Now Japan	like Teen Spirit...	







Hello Everybody, My Name's ECM... and I'm a *Monster Ranch*aholic

If you've read GameFan fairly closely over the past three years, you may note that we have a wholly unhealthy love affair with Tecmo's *Monster Rancher* games. Myself, Eggo, The Judge and our senior layout artist, Tao (the single most unhealthy person in a ranch—er, office of sick and twisted *MR* fans), have spent more cumulative hours on this series of games than on any other since the arrival of the first chapter... And while the game really is nothing more than *Pokémon* on horse steroids, it's been good enough for our moderately jaded staff to nearly sell our souls over. On a seemingly daily basis, Tao cries out "Where's *Monster Rancher 3*? Curse you, Tecmo," shakes his fist, and goes back to laying out page after thankless page. I like to think he's toiling over one of *MR*'s various training scenarios... over and over and over again.

So, with a near undying lust for the series, we're willing to give just about anything a go that at all approximates (even in part) an *MR* game. Heck, we even took Fury down to a ranch in Chatsworth (just down the street from GF HQ) and started 'training' him for battle. Sadly, Ken Shamrock made short work of him—R.I.P., Fury (now you know how Chad Muska feels, nimrod). And now that we have Sega/Aki's *Animastar*, we can stop mourning Fury's loss and get back to the games, which are much more fun (and a lot less messy) than raising a 'valley dood' (Fury's official species).



A Pinch of This, A Dash of That

Animastar can essentially be described as *Monster Rancher* meets *Gallop Racer*. Yep, it's a keen blend of essential *Monster Rancher* elements (various training exercises, a helpful animal keeper to guide you, trips to town to acquire new monsters, etc.) and *Gallop Racer* (take your animal to the track and race him to glory...or the glue factory). Its visual style's **clearly** inspired by Tecmo's *Monster Rancher*, and it wouldn't be much of a stretch to say that any of the critters in *Animastar* would be at home in any of the *MR* titles.

Little House on the Prairie

Unlike *Monster Rancher*, however, players do not randomly generate animals from a CD—they're given one from the outset, and must 'hunt' for new ones later (more on that in a bit). Then, once you have your new critter on the ranch, you can run him through a number of drills to boost his stamina, speed, power, etc. Each of the training sequences is played out in a series of 3D shorts that show your particular beastie completing each task. And also unlike *Monster Rancher*, your critter **never** fails at one of these tasks—it's simply a way to build stats. Thankfully, you can completely disable the 3D shorts (seen one, seen 'em all), which speeds the leveling up process dramatically.

Players can also take a trip to town and hire the local explorer's guild to hunt new critters. Pick the location on the continent (different areas harbor different animas), fund their expedition, and they're off. Be forewarned, however (since the owner doesn't really stress this enough), that you will **not** always get something for your money... as the old saying goes, caveat emptor (which means something about—uh, hey Fury...).



REVIEW	ECM: *Monster Racer*	Developer - Aki / Publisher - Sega	1 Player / Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 86



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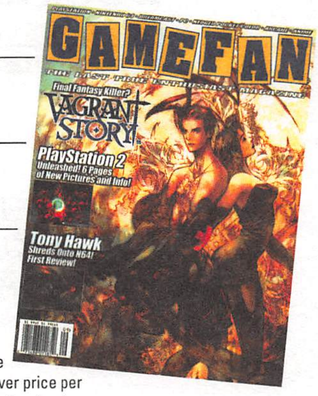
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A Day At the Races

After you've sufficiently trained a beast, you can take it down to the racetrack and vie against other anima wranglers for money and better rankings (which, in turn, lead to more difficult tourneys and, naturally, more money). Once the race begins, players have limited control over the creature (again, just like *MR*). That is to say that you don't control acceleration directly. Rather, the game features a meter that you can use to 'coax' the critter to run faster—beats riding on its back and bludgeoning the poor polygonal pony with a flail, right? Naturally, you'll want to immediately crank it up to sound barrier-shattering velocities, but if your chosen champion doesn't have enough stamina, it'll soon fall behind and get laughed off the circuit (though I suppose those are actually just the voices of my gracious co-workers <grumble>). It's a delicate balancing act adjusting the amount of 'motivating' you do relative to the strength of a particular anima.

And don't think that's all there is to it... While you also have limited steering ability (again, set by your agility rating from training), you can head-butt foes as you pass and cause them to lose a few legs in the race—sorta like the *Animastar* version of *Road Rash*. Just keep in mind that *everything* reduces your chances of finishing the race... Try to cripple too many of the competitors with rampant strikes, and you'll soon run out of gas. Fodder for the glue factory? Maybe...





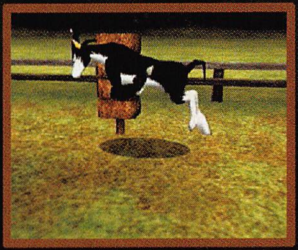




Down at the Groomer

Animastar certainly has a lot going for it in the looks department... All the critters are quite well rendered with smooth animation and solid color, and the game moves quickly at a solid clip (60 fps). In fact, the majority of the animas look like something from *Pokémon* all grown up—and as far as I'm concerned, the faster Pokémon grows up (and dies) the better.

Aurally, the game features just what you'd expect of a game inspired by *Pokémon* and *Monster Rancher*. I'm not even going to insult your intelligence and describe the tunes, as they're probably already maddeningly milling about your skull (must stop the voices—argh)...



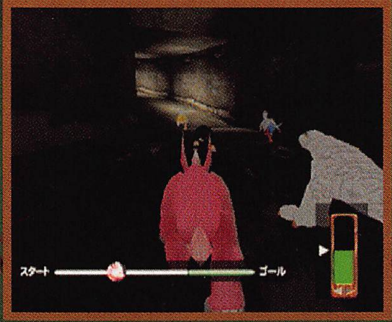
Racing to a Dreamcast Near You?

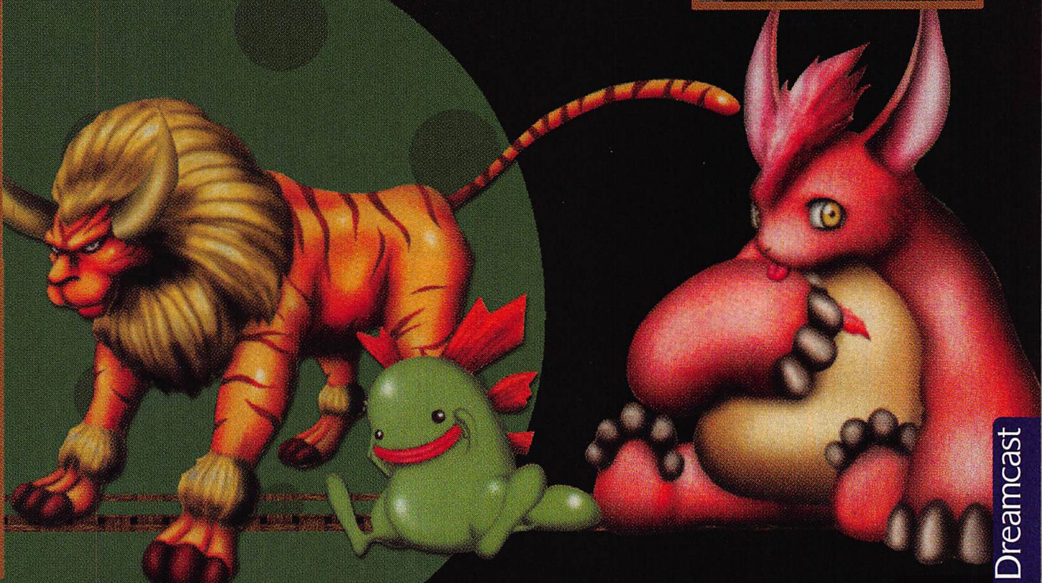
Currently, there's no confirmation that this one's coming Stateside, but I wouldn't doubt the possibility. This could be Sega's *Pokémon* (marketed correctly, naturally), and that might be too promising for SOA to pass up. If you can't wait, though, the game's visual enough to pick up and play perfectly, even if you have no working knowledge of Japanese. Now, if only I could find a way to breed these cursed things...

ECM dreams of someday owning a ranch in Montana, raising editors from hatchlings, and the capitol of Nebraska is Lincoln.





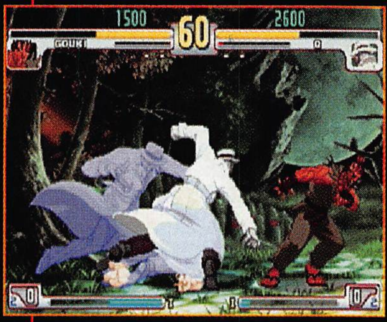




Dreamcast



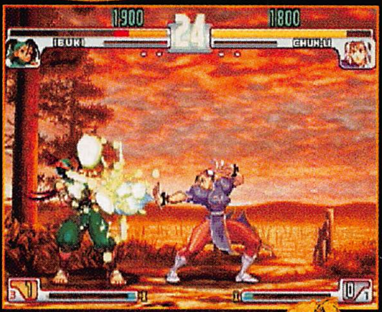
What do you do if you have a successful game on your hands and want to make some extra coin off of it? Well, if you're EA or Capcom, you release intermittent updates to the original, sprinkle in some new characters/rosters, tweak the gameplay and make some minor graphical improvements. O.K., at this point, almost any comparison between EA and Capcom would die a fiery, blazing death... and for my own good, too (to prevent the Capcom-heads from seeking mine). Unlike EA, Capcom generally *improves* on each subsequent release of a game—in fact, I have a hard time thinking of the last instance in which a Capcom title **didn't** outdo its predecessor (in the U.S., at least—must forget *Final Fight Revenge,* must forget *Final Fight Revenge,* must forget *Final Fight Revenge*... but I can't <whimper>)... Which unfortunately segues nicely into *Street Fighter III: Third Strike*, the latest Dreamcast game from Capcom and the newest iteration in the much-misunderstood *SFIII* lineage...



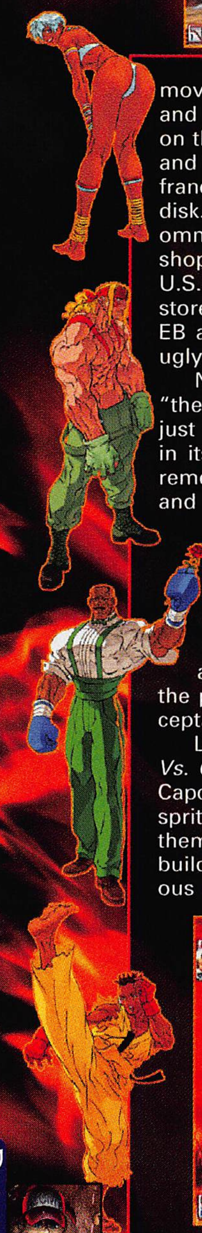
First the good news: *SFIII:TS* plays **exactly** like its arcade counterpart. All the moves, parries, combos, etc., etc., are in there, and nothing's been deleted, modified or "left on the cutting room floor." Gameplay's a joy, and the long years Capcom's poured into the franchise shine through every crevice of the disk. In fact, if not for one **glaring** flaw, I'd recommend you run out to the nearest import shop, score a copy of it and leave the recent U.S. release of *SFIII: W Impact* to fester on store shelves. Sadly, you'd best call the local EB and reserve a copy of it now—things get ugly from here on out.




3rd STRIKE STREET FIGHTER III



Now, I'll avoid going into some crazed, "the shadows aren't blue" rant here, but let me just say I'm stunned that this game came out in its ragged condition. Who else out there remembers the slightly noticeable jaggedness and pixelation on Capcom's *MvC* DC titles? The sprites were drawn small and scaled via the DC's hardware to save memory VRAM—which was understandable, and perhaps even expected in a game with as many as four characters and the most intense supers imaginable. However, after witnessing the arcade perfection of the previous *SFIII* on DC, this is wholly unacceptable in *Third Strike.*

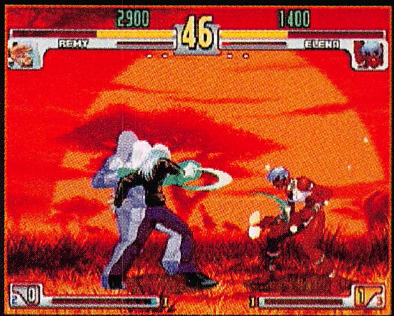


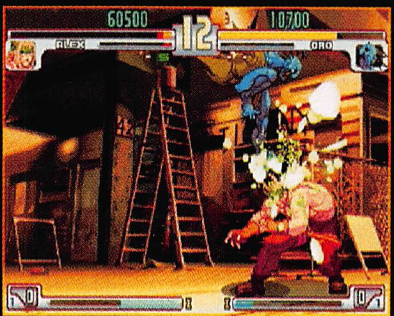
Like the recent (early) E3 showing of *SNK Vs. Capcom* on NAOMI, it was apparent that Capcom had pulled the same trick with the sprites, stretching them out and pixelating them in the process... chalk that up to an early build of the game. However, when the previous edition blows away the current version, something's rotten in Tokyo (at this point, the EA analogy starts to take hold again). How on Earth the newer version could be worse graphically than the prior incarnation is beyond me... Different team? Nah. Different hardware? Nope, it's still a port of a CPS3 game to Dreamcast. So much more animation and background detail that Capcom couldn't possibly hope to contain its unfettered might in the stifling confines of DC VRAM? Hah! Wait till we start seeing PS2 ports of 2D Capcom fighters. The truth is that I have no idea why the game looks significantly worse. What I do know is that you should avoid it like the plague. Try this one on a VGA box, and the pixels will cut your eyes, the edges are so jagged and sharp...

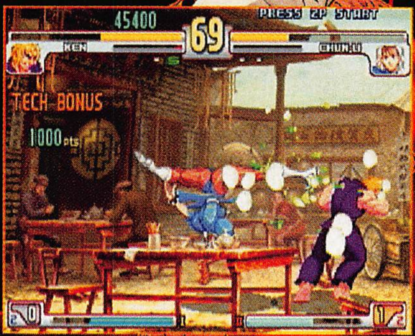


Needless to say, it's probably best if you skip this one. Sure, it plays like *SFIII*, but that's a lot like watching a movie on DVD and then going back to VHS—is anyone that sick and twisted? If you're a Capcom superfreak, by all means... But for the rest of you, go buy *W Impact* now and pray that this EA-like aberration is just that—an aberration.

ECM has left GameFan, and will be replaced by a smaller, scaled up, pixelly version: ECM 2 Turbo: Championship Edition.

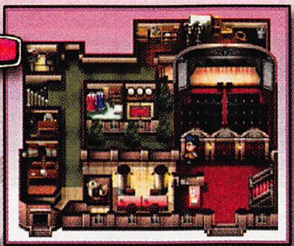






REVIEW	ECM: Yer out!	Developer - Capcom Publisher - Capcom	1-2 Players Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 77







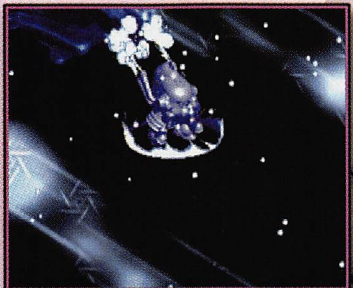


Lately, I've been splitting most of my time between the turn-based combat of *Front Mission 3* and the dating simulation stylings of *Kita e*. So it should come as no surprise that I jumped at the chance to spend some time with the Dreamcast update of *Sakura Taisen* (a.k.a. *Sakura Wars*)... ECM billed the game as a combination of both genres, so naturally, my curiosity was more than a little piqued.

As the hero of the game, Ichiro Oogami, players are commanded by the Imperial Navy to take the helm of the Hanagumi branch of the Teikokukagekidan (Imperial Floral Assault Group, to those not in the know.) to battle demons in 1900's Paris. This might sound like an arduous task, but when you see that the entire team working beneath you (so to speak) is staffed by beautiful girls, who are your battle team members and potential love interests.

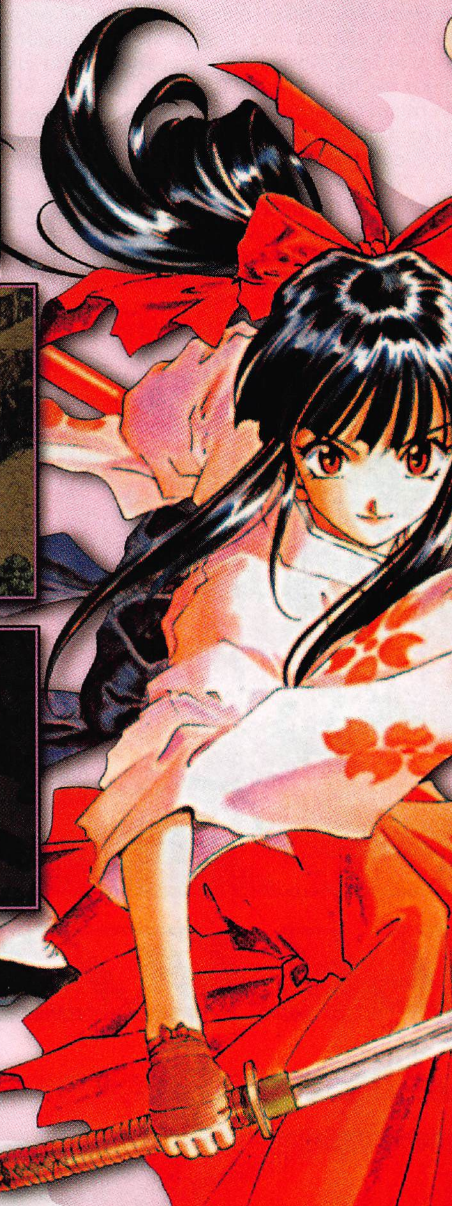
From there, the action of *Sakura Wars* varies; primarily, it's a dating sim, and secondarily, it's a strategy game. Gamers spend the bulk of play wandering around the complex, moving from room to room and triggering social events. As you talk to each girl in the compound, she'll periodically ask you a brief series of questions in a very short time (such as, "Do you prefer Sakura, or do you prefer Sumire?"). With multiple kanji laden answers to read, you must know Japanese to understand all that's going on. The answers to these questions will lead you down to path to coupled bliss with one of the girls at the end of the game, forcing you to play multiple times to see all the endings.











Interlaced in all this chapter-based dating madness, however, are turn-based battles in which Ichiro and the girls don mechanized metal suits and fight the demonic scourge that threatens the land. Finding the correct balance between the characters and their standard multiple and long-range attacks is the key to victory.

As you'd expect, every single graphical aspect of the game's been refined and polished to a brilliant sheen; the animated scenes, which retain the original game's size (half-screen), look much better, lose all traces of 'graininess' and break-up, and now reside squarely in the neighborhood of many anime movies.

Unfortunately, the bottom line is this: If you take it as a stand-alone game and not as a remake, it's an average dating sim mixed with a decent battle system. If you take the game as an upgraded remake of a 'classic game' (and that's up for debate), though, the moderate graphical improvement just isn't worth the purchase price to take one more trip down memory lane, especially when you can pick up old Saturn versions of *Sakura Wars 1* & *2* for around twenty bucks. My advice: Hold out for *Sakura 3* and scour eBay for the original game.

Kodomo's waiting for a 'real' dating sim, full of married women and strippers from Las Vegas.

Viewpoint Score : 78	Developer - Red Company	1 Player	Kodomo: Sakura...
	Publisher - Sega	Available Now Japan	I choose you!

R REVIEW



If there's one thing you can count on the Dreamcast for, it's sequels. Look, I love originality as much as the next guy (of course, after playing *Fur Fighters,* I'm starting to rethink that logic), but it's just as awesome to take a stroll down memory lane with members of the old school—peeps like Sonic, the cast of *Phantasy Star,* Ecco, the AMS agents from *House of the Dead* and Chakan (hey, can't a guy keep hope alive for the Forever Man?). Yup, Sega certainly has an incredible library of franchises to pull from... Just imagine some stunning updates to *Eternal Champions, Panzer Dragoon, NiGHTS* and *Rent a Hero.* Uh, *Rent a* who?!? Megadrive, you say? That's right, unless you were an avid buyer of Megadrive games during the early '90s or were a fan of extremely off-the-wall titles, this is probably the first time you've heard of Sega's classic hero for hire. But why remake a text-heavy niche game that'll likely never come to the United States—especially one in which the main character busts out into fruity animations (check your testosterone at the door) every time he transforms?

Well, Sega's currently struggling to regain market share in Japan, so it's not surprising that AM2 would attempt to target more of a hard-core crowd—the very same gamers that bought the original *Rent a Hero* back in 1990 and could appreciate a second dose of goofy play mechanics. O.K., maybe "goofy" doesn't quite relay the message of how oddly this game plays out... Unfortunately, to really appreciate many of the bizarre jokes in it, you'd have to have a firm understanding of Japanese pop culture... not to mention more than a basic grasp of the Japanese language.

Rent a Hero No. 1 takes place in a detailed series of Japanese suburbs, and is almost like Sega's wacky version of *Shenmue.* Players control Taro, a blonde adolescent who doubles as the city's resident hero for hire. When Taro logs onto his SECA Creamcast (see what I mean about bizarre humor?), he receives e-mails from a SECA contact that helps him land odd jobs around town. Of course, nobody's going to entrust his or her precious cargo to a mere teenager... So Taro changes into a *Virtua Cop*-like superhero outfit (rented directly from the local costume shop) and keeps himself busy with one 'heroic' task after another, i.e., making deliveries for a local fast food joint or escorting large sums of money from one bank to another. And while those tasks might seem rudimentary at first, our Rent a Hero is often confronted by seedy criminals out to disturb his steady work schedule, and then, the game switches its focus from deliveries to a bit of ass-whooping. Yes, like Ryo in *Shenmue,* Taro acquires a number of different fighting techniques over time that he can dish out through a series of basic button combinations... not unlike the control scheme found in many standard beat-'em-ups.

It kind of seems like AM2 worked off of a moderate budget for *Rent a Hero,* but the game's engine is surprisingly refined. Its textures look super-clean, its character models are decent (though light years from *Shenmue*'s), there's very little pop-up or frame drop, and the fighting system (which comes into play after every thousand or so conversations) seems pretty tight. Unfortunately, the constant joking and lighthearted atmosphere that the developers were intent on creating gives the game a very limited appeal... So unless you have a bi-lingual co-worker who sits six feet from you (thanks, Kodomo!) and can explain just what is going on, I'd hold out for the American release of *Shenmue.* Hey, once your friends witness Taro's questionable transformation poses, you'll be lucky if they ever stop ragging on you...

Fury thought the less-than-masculine poses were really cool, until the rest of the GF staff ragged on him.













レンタヒーロー RENT A HERO No. 1

REVIEW FURY: Obscure isn't the word...	Developer - Sega Publisher - Sega	1 Player Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 83





SORCERIAN

七星魔法の使徒

Sorcerian has been popular in Japan ever since it was released for the PC twelve years ago, but if you mention the title in a U.S. game store, chances are you'll receive blank stares and an offer to buy *Final Fantasy VIII* (oh, how easily the minds of retailers are swayed by hype or driven by thoughts of commission). But this is not a Square-inspired RPG... Nay, *Sorcerian* is a classic action RPG brought to you by Falcom, creator of *Popful Mail* and *Y's*. We're talking old-school gameplay here—parties of four, job switching, character stat point allocation and side-scrolling, hack-and-slash gameplay. The way it works is simple: Your party members trail the leader, mimicking his actions move for move. You jump, they jump... you swing your sword, so do they... The group leader can be changed instantly, and most characters have magic spells, as well.

There are fifteen quests available in the DC version, though many of them are just rehashes of quests from the previous *Sorcerian* games. There are some new Dreamcast-exclusive quests, too, but overall, *Disciples of Seven Star Magic* is still just a 128-bit update of a classic game. You might've even played *Sorcerian* when it was released for the PC in the U.S. by Sierra a decade ago...

So is the import worth picking up? Unfortunately, unless you possess a commanding grasp of the Japanese language, it's almost impossible to enjoy. The customization of characters is in-depth, and not easily negotiated without some serious knowledge of kanji (katakana/hiragana won't help you here!). I've recommended picking up text-heavy imports before (even RPGs) because their gameplay was either simple or linear, or if a little Japanese could get you a long way. However, such is not the case here. Most likely, hard-core *Sorcerian* fans have already bought this game—but if you're questioning an import purchase, I suggest looking elsewhere. This series has a very small fan base in America, so I'd expect that it'll stay an import... and rightfully so.

Eggo would like to see another Popful Mail *or* Y's *game rather than this.*













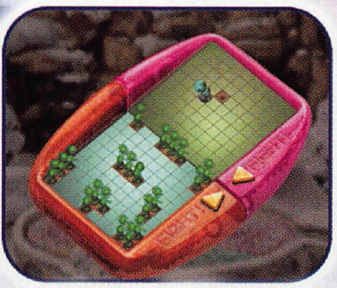


VIEWPOINT SCORE :69	DEVELOPER - FALCOM	1 PLAYER	EGGO: GAIJIN ALERT!	R REVIEW
	PUBLISHER - VICTOR INTERACTIVE	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	ACCESS DENIED.	



Is there anybody else out there that used to peruse the old import gaming ads in the back of game books in the very late '80s and early '90s? I'd tear through those things ferociously, trying to decipher exactly what all the quirky, odd and mysterious titles could possibly refer to... I mean, what exactly could *Rabio Lepus* be? Or *Nadia in Wonderfall*—ooh, and what about *Dragonball?!* Now, *that* sounded cool... I'd sit there for hours and hours, simply trying to guess what those games might be...fighting games, RPGs, shooters?! The list went on and on. And yes, I had **a lot** of free time in high school...





Fast-forward to 1999, and I'm flipping through some of the latest issues of Japan's Dreamcast Magazine, armed with a smattering of Japanese, translating this, that and the next thing, when I come upon something called *Logic Battle Daisakusen*—and the first thing I know, the ol' "what could this be" engine that I haven't used since GameFan came on the scene kicks in. Strategy RPG? String theory puzzle game? Shooter?! Ha ha ha, right... No, *Logic Battle Daisakusen* is simply *Battleship.*

That's right—45's (the guys that brought you games only the Japanese could really get, like *July* and *Tokyo Bus Guide)* latest is, essentially, a clone of Milton Bradley's classic board game *Battleship.* Hold on! Now, I realize your first inclination is to page away from this review at a six-pack-of-Red-Bull-fueled, neck-snapping pace, but this game's actually pretty good. It's not stellar, not revolutionary, but it's fun. And no, I haven't been drinking from the same faucet as Fury... not much, anyway.

Yep, set up your 'battleships' amid a board and challenge a bevy of fruity Japanese computer players to a round or two... that's pretty much it. The pieces obviously aren't naval ships (actually, they're fruity little critters), but the concept's the same—guess where the enemy 'ships' are and attempt to 'sink' them. I know, I know, it sounds stupid, but oddly enough, it's fun. Best of all, there's no cheating. I can just remember the days in which I used to wile away with my brother on this one:

Logic Battle
通信対戦ロジックバトル 大雪戦
だいせっせん







Brother: A-9.
Me: Miss!
Brother: C-3.
Me: Miss!
—6 Hours Pass—
Brother: Z-9
Me: Miss!
Brother: Man, I can't seem to hit anything...
Me: Hey, keep at it. You'll hit something... eventually <snicker>.

Oh, and get this: The game's a WinCE product! And I like it! Will wonders never cease?

Suffice it to say that if you can get this game cheap, you'd be a fool to pass it up. The rest of the staff went gaga over *Get Colonies* a few months back, but this one's definitely my pick; it's the better of the lot. Who knows, maybe we'll get *Hungry Hungry Hippos* with Pokémon next...



Yes, ECM definitely misses the good ol' '80s, back before his little brother was taller than him.



R REVIEW	ECM: You sank my... little fruity man?	Developer - 45 / Publisher - 45	1-2 Players / Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 82





First, a disclaimer: *Advanced Daisenriyaku* has only one playable side, that of Nazi Germany, so if you're not up to digitally ravaging Europe, ca. 1935-1945, move on to kinder, gentler gaming (yeah, right). With that out of the way, *AD* is one of the deepest and most engaging turn-based strategy games to date. It seems as though no detail's been overlooked when it comes to an accurate historical depiction of WWII, which is played out in battle on a hexagon-based grid system. Pick your poison, the single-mission Scenario or the full War Campaign mode, and then do your best to destroy all opposition...





The beginning of each mission yields base camps, vehicles and troops of the specific time. Players are then given a certain amount of points, which are used to request reinforcement forces or upgrade existing ones. After that, move your forces out, capture towns and destroy enemies. To truly succeed, you'll have to know your own limitations and those of your enemy's, and set up mismatches, such as heavy tanks versus infantry or air attacks versus gun emplacements. Weather and terrain (along with altitude, for planes) will affect attack strength and probability, adding yet another variable to account for.

ADVANCED 大戦略™

Sturm über Europa—Der deutsche Blitzkrieg

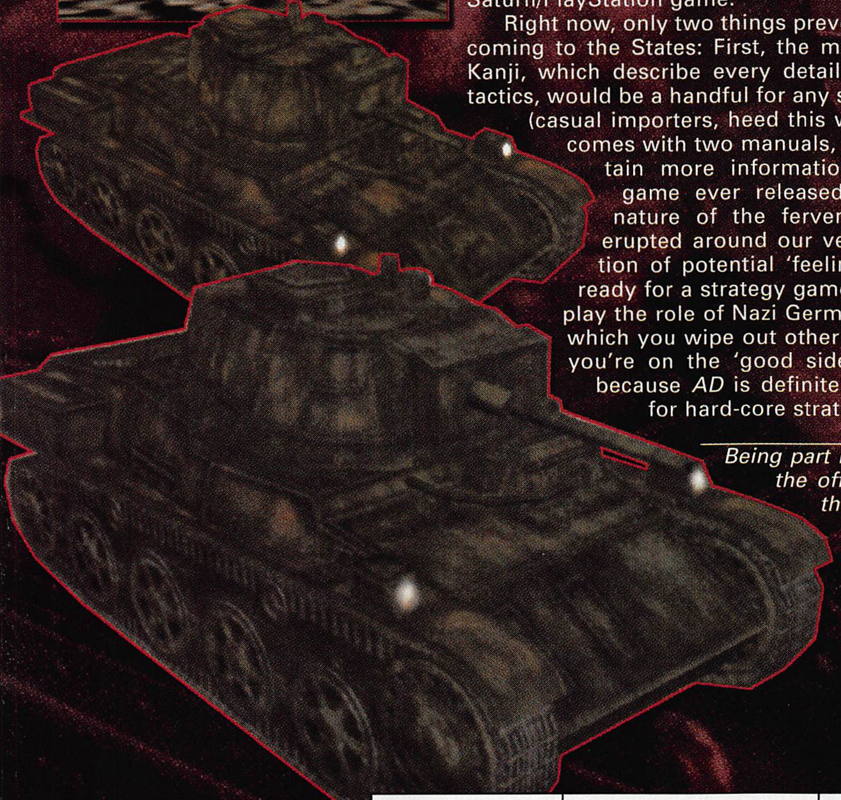


You'd have to look hard to see the DC upgrades, which are only located in the real-time battles that occur after you've chosen your strategy. If you choose to go the sane route, avoiding these animations and the hellish amounts of time they destroy, you won't see too much beyond an average Saturn/PlayStation game.



Right now, only two things prevent this game from coming to the States: First, the massive amounts of Kanji, which describe every detail of weaponry and tactics, would be a handful for any studio to undertake (casual importers, heed this warning, too!). *AD* comes with two manuals, both of which contain more information than any other game ever released. Second, if the nature of the fervent arguments that erupted around our very office is any indication of potential 'feelings,' the U.S. just isn't ready for a strategy game in which you can only play the role of Nazi Germany. Playing a game in which you wipe out other foes is O.K., as long as you're on the 'good side...' It's too bad, too, because *AD* is definitely worth a second look for hard-core strategy gamers.





Being part British, Kodomo avoided the office "discussions" about this game, until he found his forces pounding through England.

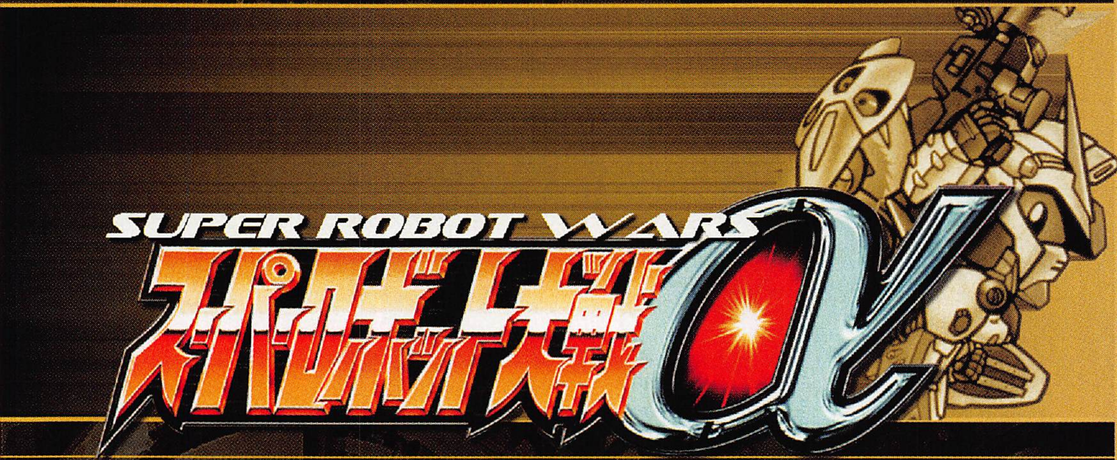




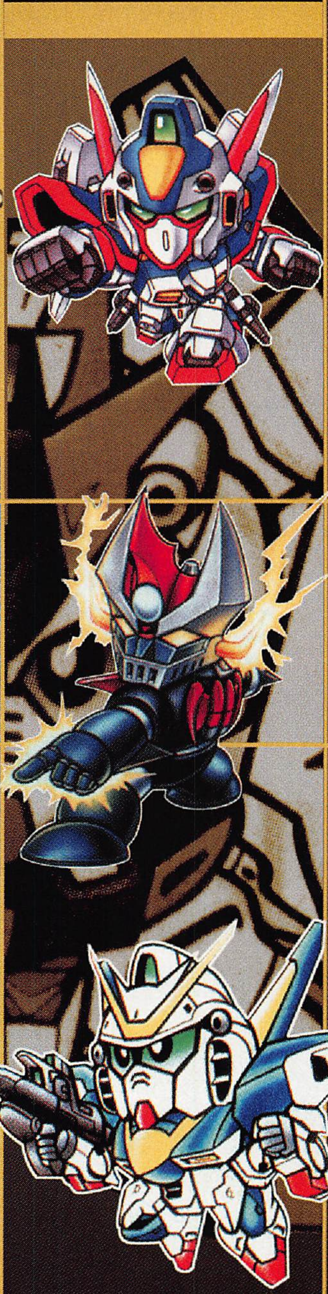
Viewpoint Score :82	Developer - System Soft / Publisher - Sega	1-8 Players / Available Now Japan	Kodomo: It's goooood to be baaaaaaaaaaad!

R Review

Dreamcast







ECM Ga Otaku Ja Arimasen Yo

I consider myself a student of Japanese culture—sushi, sake, soba, Sapporo... Yep, when it comes to Japanese 'culture,' sign me up, and don't forget the wet nap. What I don't understand, though, is the small bunch of U.S. gamers that refer to themselves as otaku (though, I suppose, they're as much anime fans as game fans)—people like Shidoshi that equate life to *Pokémon*, dating sims and fruit-colored hair inspired by the latest anime. There is, however, one small portion of Japanese pop culture that I have a big soft spot for: giant robot culture. "Mazinger Z," "Gundam," "Virtual On," "Giant Robo," "Macross," "Evangelion," "Seven Star Story," "Detonator Organ," and on and on and on... anything that features a giant robot (or mech suit) stomping around and blowing stuff up is aces in my book.

Only On PlayStation?!

This time out, it's solely available for PlayStation (previous editions found their way to Saturn <sob>, and more recently to the N64), and Banpresto's added much to keep the series fresh. The animation in the battle sequences has been increased exponentially for this chapter, sporting what appears to be some serious multi-jointed sprite action (think Treasure-style boss animation)—the series has never looked better. Also, instead of the standard top-down map, the game's been re-oriented to feature an isometric perspective. Sure, it really doesn't look much better than the other chapters, but it's still a nice change of pace.

Da Vinci Isn't Losing Any Sleep

But nobody plays the *SRW* games for the graphics, right? You play it because of the huge selection of 'robots,' and from Macross to Mazinger Z, from Giant Robo to Gundam, they're all in here. The action's deceptively sedate, but ultimately addictive in the extreme. Ostensibly, it's a strategy RPG in the vein of *Shining Force* and *FF Tactics*, though it has an equal helping of hex-based map moving. What sets it apart, though, is the complete fruitiness of it all... As mechs engage one another, you're treated to the soundtrack from the anime in question while your robot faces off against everything from insidious Zokus (from "Gundam") to rubber-suited monsters straight out of "Power Rangers."



You Have To Be This Tall To Ride...

Sure, it may not look terribly impressive, but just give it a try, and you'll be hooked. The series is **huge** in Japan. Each installment since the SuperFami days has sold well in excess of half a million copies. Thankfully, the language barrier is low, and through some basic trial and error (even if you don't know any Japanese), it's readily accessible to any Western gamer. Hey, it may even prompt you to learn your sa's and ka's... but probably not.

Made in the USA

Of course, said culture sprang from an American: Robert A. Heinlein, author of such novels as "The Puppet Masters" (no, not the "Full Moon" movies, nerd-o), and the immortal "Starship Troopers," from which the creator of "Gundam" (arguably the greatest of the giant robot epics and the source from which all others flow) drew his inspiration. Hey, as far as I'm concerned, Warner Bros.' tragically underrated epic "The Iron Giant" brought giant robot culture full circle...



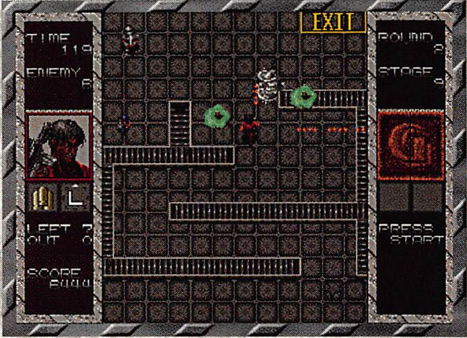
R REVIEW ECM: *Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Super Robots*	Developer - Banpresto	1 Player	Viewpoint Score :89
	Publisher - Banpresto	Available Now Japan	



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Gain Ground

It's not typical that I'll let someone else write Graveyard, so it usually takes a little something extra to coax me away from the mighty soap box and cede it to some unworthy misanthrope (a.k.a. one of my co-workers). However, when the stars are just right and they come upon me on hands and knees, through a field strewn with broken glass, bearing gifts of frankincense, myrrh and a tale that needs to be told, I relent. So without further ado (preamble, even), here's one of the Judge's favorite pasttimes (mine too) between marathon sessions of *IdiotQuest—Search for a Life*: Sega/Renovation Products' *Gain Ground*. ECM

I love it when ECM lets me write Graveyard... I definitely rate as one of the grumpiest gamers in the office, and I reminisce about the days when developers had to rely on gameplay instead of licenses and graphics to woo gamers. Oh, I could talk all day about *Pirates!*, *Rescue Raiders* or *Gunstar Heroes* (and I have), and fond memories of titles like *Seven Cities of Gold*, *Shinobi* and *General Chaos* also dance in my mind as I search desperately for the same kind of satisfaction from today's games. Then reality comes crashing down around me, and I have to continue playing the current cookie-cutter PlayStation title—which, this month, just happens to be the *Colony Wars* rip-off *Star Trek Invasion*. Sure, it looks great and has a good engine, but where's the fun?

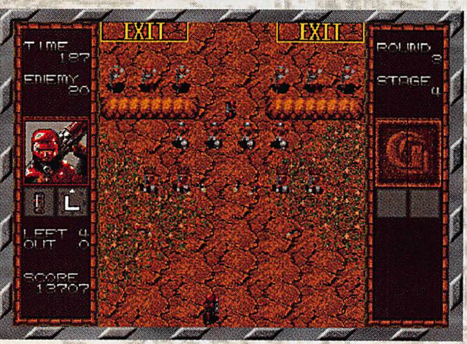
Ugh. After toiling (and boy, did I ever toil) over my preview of that game, it came time to retreat into the comfortable, secure arms of an old friend for the medicine that I needed. This month, that antidote was *Gain Ground*, one of the all-time best Genesis titles. *Gain Ground* was one of the platform's more obscure games, but it boasts a near-perfect blend of action and strategy that begs to be played over and over again.

> ***"...a near-perfect blend of action and strategy that begs to played over and over..."***

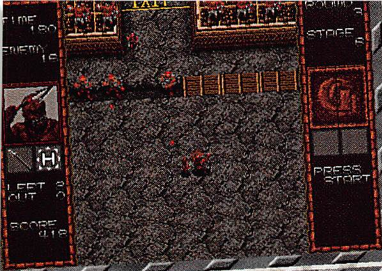
The premise of the game is simple: To advance through the levels, players must either move their men from the entrance to the exit of the map, or kill all enemies on-screen. The objectives are as straightforward as they come, but actually accomplishing them requires a great deal of skill and strategy. Each level features a wide variety of enemies and obstacles to navigate, and brings its own set of daunting challenges.

Along the way, you're given the opportunity to rescue additional warriors to round out your force. Each new warrior brings his or her own strengths to the arsenal, but numbers are important, too: The more soldiers one has, the more soldiers one has to reach the exit. And, if a player gets hit while trying to rescue a trapped comrade, then

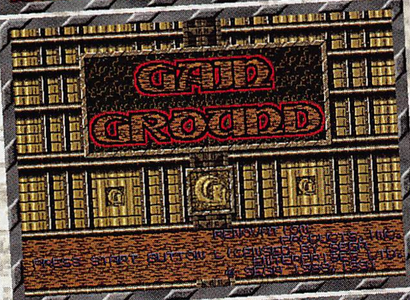




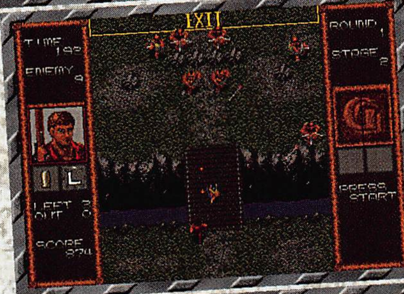


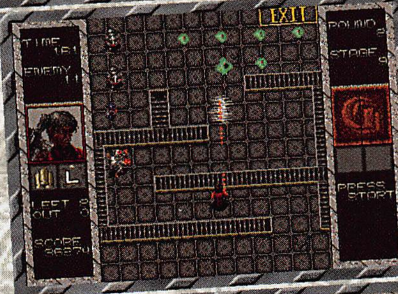




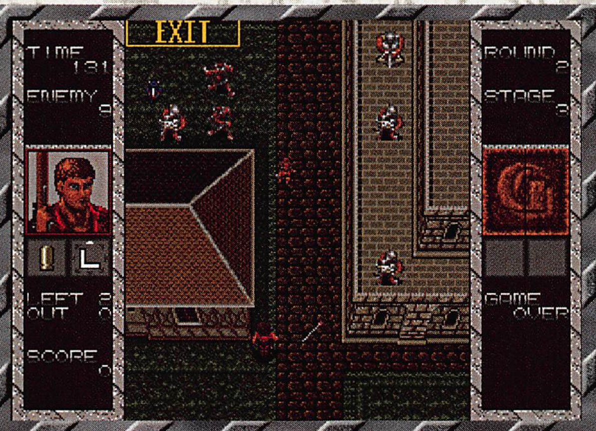




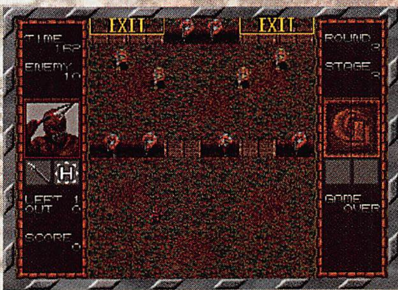




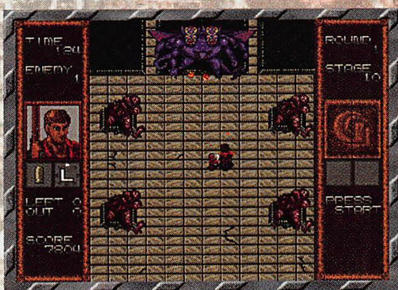














that player, too, must be rescued. Soldiers can only rescue one character at a time, and in order to gain access to new warriors, you must get those characters to the exit.

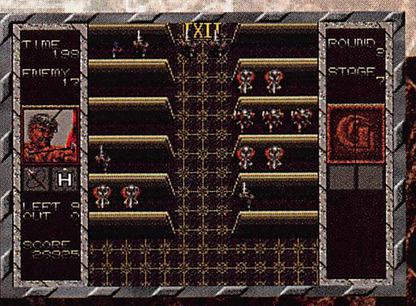
The strategy of the game is based on sizing up the lay of the land, and then figuring out which fighters are best equipped to deal with it. If there are enemies perched on walls or behind gravestones, then someone with the ability to lob grenades or shoot a longbow will be needed, while open areas with many enemies require characters with a faster rate of fire, better foot speed or area-effect weapons. If there are fighters in need of rescue, you'll have to take into account the number of men necessary to pull them to the exit, and whether or not you can sacrifice those men to get to them.

"If you have yet to try this priceless title, then I urge you to get a copy of the game."

Gain Ground is also playable as a two-player game. In this mode, gameplay changes very little... Gamers play together, and must decide whose squad needs what trapped fighters to best round out his team. A greedy partner that leaves his friend with a couple of spearmen and a grenadier will ultimately hurt his chances of completing all of the missions.

If you have yet to try this priceless title, then I urge you to get a copy of the game. Few next-generation titles come anywhere close to offering the same kind of exciting and skillful challenge as *Gain Ground,* a hard-core gamer's game. **The Judge**





So who are the best soldiers to have in your squad? Well, many of the higher-level mercs have some impressive specialty weapons, but the best all-around guys are the two bowmen. The Norseman and the elf tout the perfect blend of speed, high fire rate and the ability to hit elevated and concealed enemies. If you lose these guys, don't expect to finish the game.









Published by: Sony Imagesoft
Original Release: 1993

SKYBLAZER

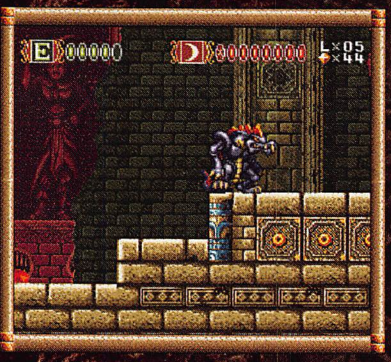




This month, you're getting a double dose of Graveyard goodness 'thanks' to a last-minute no-show (and now that I think about it, you're getting the better part of the deal). So while I'm sure you enjoyed the Judge's jaunt down memory lane with *Gain Ground*—ooh, the alliteration's starting to get goofy—we all know that if you want the real deal, you have to go to the source. No sidekick (no matter how well-versed in the occasional Graveyard-friendly game) can take the place of the one, the only... me. So without further ado, let's take a look at what could very well be the prototypical Graveyard title: Sony Imagesoft's *Sky Blazer.*

Come Fly Away, Come Fly Away With Me

Back before Sony became the world-conquering, company-smashing corporate drudge that brought gaming to the masses, it made the occasional super hard-core game—so occasional, in fact, that the only other titles that even leap to memory are the classic *Solstice* (on NES) and the 'will it ever come out?' *Equinox* (on SNES). However, Sony's finest hour **ever** (and that's counting all the *Twisted Metal*s, *Warhawk*s and *Gran Turismo*s the latter-day Imagesoft's ever created) was the immortal *Sky Blazer*—a game that, by my calculations, ten people bought, played and loved to death in the good ol' 'we really wouldn't know a good game if it kicked us in the teeth' U.S. of A.











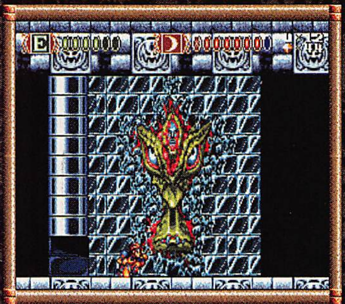












Movin' On Up

Sky Blazer was created by none other than the mastermind behind *Gran Turismo* (and, later, *Omega Boost*), Sony's in-house developer Polyphony Digital (and if I hear one more time that Sony has no in-house developers, I'm gonna scream)—which was also responsible for the *Motor Toon* games, for you trivia-heads. *Sky Blazer* probably seemed pretty par for the course if you based your game-buying decisions on back-of-the-box copy—after all, it *looked* a lot like countless other SNES platformers of the day, with brilliant color and cartoony graphics. But what did Mom always say about "judging a book by its cover?"

Simply put, *Sky Blazer* was one of the greatest SNES games of **all time**. Why it even took this long to get into Graveyard is beyond me—though, when you live in the past on a daily basis like I do, you sometimes overlook things...

"...a game that, by my calculations, ten people bought, played and loved to death..."

Stop Me If You've Heard This Before

You're Sky, a superhero out to end the reign of the evil demon Ashura (not sure if he was actually labeled a demon—after all, this was during Nintendo's weenie phase... Wow, look at all the 'sweat' flying off of Liu Kang. Neat-o.). Of course, he had to save a princess along the way, but can you really fault the guy? After all, all the cool kids were doing it. Needless to say, the story was mostly throwaway, though the banter between Sky and his wisecracking mentor, Old Man (creative, I know), was actually quite amusing. Anyway, enough of the recyclable and environmentally friendly story line and on to the game...

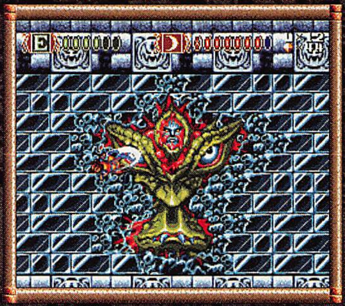
If I had to describe *Sky Blazer* to someone that knew even a little bit about video games, I'd probably phrase it thusly: The game, essentially, plays a lot like *Strider*. You have your "triangle jumps," a 'sword' that leaves a ribbon of energy in its wake and some of the most incredibly designed levels (and boss encounters) ever packed into a cartridge.

Brush In Hand...

As you careen from level to lushly illustrated level, you'll revel in the brilliant color (generally a hallmark of many SNES games, but it's even more impressive here), up to five layers of parallax on certain stages (yes, five!) and very nice Mode 7 levels. In these sequences, you'll float through the sky with the greatest of ease, collecting gems to boost Sky's life count. Naturally, this leads to a dizzying, euphoric nostalgia trip that'll bring back a flood of memories from games as diverse as *F-Zero* and *Final Fantasy II*.

The animation's also incredibly impressive, especially for a game of its age, and the bosses... whoa. Most of these Mode 7 terrors are not only brilliantly designed, but also feature some pretty tricky 'you could only do this on SNES' (well, it's mostly true) tricks, like the boss/giant face that rotates as the screen rotates 'around' Sky, and he must leap through narrow openings to avoid being crushed. Oh, and the always impressive 'rotating tower trick' also makes a cameo appearance... This was crazy stuff way back in '93, before the onslaught of 3D games crushed them mercilessly.

So why is this game the "prototypical Graveyard title"? It's simple, really: It plays fantastically, with a bevy of stunning play mechanics, it looks amazing, with vibrant color and solid Mode 7 imagery, and hey, it was completely neglected by the masses. So if you're looking for a hot little number to curl up with one fine evening, you should definitely seek out *Sky Blazer* and its 'sequel,' *Hook* (they share the same engine)—as always, you'll thank me for it later. **ECM**








AnimeFan

Anime, Manga, J-pop, Asian Live Action, Otaku Culture

A Note from Shidoshi...

As I sit here writing this, a major situation is building up in the world of anime in the US. I don't want to say much right now, as I'd like to see how things evolve over the next week or two. So, uhm, not too much else going on beyond that. Oh, well, I guess there's that whole thing of my trip to Japan. *heh* Three days from my writing this, I'll be on a plane for a 15 hour trip to Osaka. After meeting up with my girlfriend, I'll be losing my mind as I take in the game stores, arcades, anime shops, SNK and Capcom buildings, shrines, temples, noodle shops, karaoke bars, culture, and anything else I have the time for. I'm bouncing in my seat just thinking of the whole thing.

- *shidoshi@gamefan.com*

Special Feature

It's that time—time to announce the new AnimeFan official "Unofficial Idol." Yes, we must sadly bid a fond farewell to that wonderful and adorable supergroup SPEED, as each of the girls have left to carve out their own careers. Of course, we wish them the best of luck. So now, without further ado... She's cute, she can sing, she writes her own lyrics, and she's a hit in Japan... She's Ayumi Hamasaki! Ayumi steps in after SPEED's departure to fill the role, be it temporarily or permanently. Sure, it won't be as much fun as it was with the SPEED, adorable and silly SPEED, but Ayumi certainly brings a great amount of talent and credibility to AnimeFan.—*shidoshi*

Audio Delights

Screenshot from >> the Multimedia CD



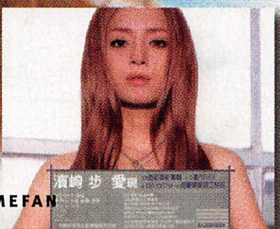
LOVEppears

CD | Ayumi Hamasaki • Album • Avex Trax | 16 + 5 Tracks • 2 CD • Jpn Release | **A+**



I was introduced to Ayumi Hamasaki when three of her songs were passed my way. After falling in love with all three, my only option was to pick up one of her albums. My decision ended upon *LOVEppears*, and I've got to tell you, I couldn't have picked any better.

Listening to Ayumi's *LOVEppears* is rather interesting, because it reminds me EXACTLY of the album I was expecting from Namie Amuro's *Genius 2000*. Ayumi's sound is very upbeat and lively, but what makes her music stand out is how each track has its own uniqueness. Often you'll find an album from an artist where either the music sounds like songs you've heard before, or even worse, all of the tracks are so bland and similar that you can listen to the entire album and not remember one tune. Such is certainly not the case here; in fact, I was amazed by the fact that there is really NO dead weight on this album. It's almost as if the sixteen best songs were taken from various albums and tossed together on one. Each track is strong, in creation and music, and each stands well on its own while strengthening one another.



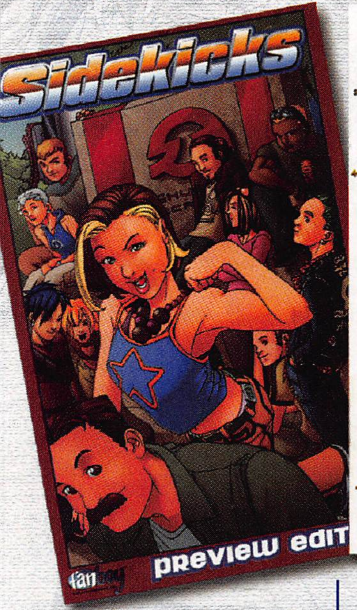
LOVEppears shows just how much of a ride it will be from the beginning. We are brought into this disc by "Introduction," and after a few moments of build-up, pushed head first into "Fly high." From this point on, the album never loses its steam. Most of the songs are, as I said, more in the flavor of dance, with thumping beats and fast tempos. Of these, I seem to most gravitate towards "Trauma," "monochrome," and the lethargic yet entrancing "appears." Even Ayumi's slower, more relaxed tracks have a perfect amount of life to them. In fact, "TO BE" and "End roll", two such tracks, are probably my favorites of the disc.

But wait... *LOVEppears* is a two-disc set. While the first CD is packed to the brim with music, the second is stuffed with goodies. Along with five remixes of other Ayumi tracks, there's a Mac/PC multimedia presentation. Loaded with information, pictures, song clips, and other media concerning Ayumi herself, her albums, her videos, and various other aspects of her life, this is an awesome addition, especially for those new to Ayumi.

If I were to choose one Japanese CD to own, it would indeed be *LOVEppears*. Yes, I would even push aside my beloved SPEED for the wondrous Ayumi. This is spectacular album, and one that I could now never live without.

—shidoshi

Manga Scene





<< Preview copies. Actual covers may differ.

Fanboy Previews

This month, I wanted to take a look at the first two upcoming titles from new manga publisher Fanboy Entertainment, who I have mentioned before. Headed up by C.B. Cebulski (who previously worked over at CPM Manga), Fanboy Ent. has a number of cool releases to look forward to in the coming future.

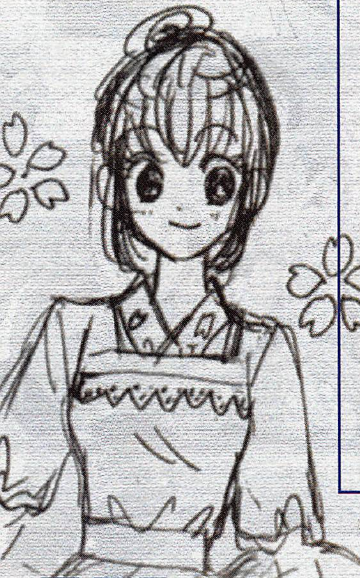
Spellbound

I talked a bit about *Spellbound* in last issue's News Service. This is a new manga title by shoujo artist Tomoko Taniguchi, but what makes it even more special is that she has written it specifically for the US market. Following up on last month's news, here's a bit more into on the story. One day, Ami (the heroine of the story) visits a fortune teller. The lady tells Ami that she has a strong aura of magical powers, and gives her a book of spells. One of the powers Ami gets is the ability to transfer from one reflective surface to another (mostly mirrors), but doing this has a side effect. Ami can often be found at her uncle's restaurant, which is famous for "okonomiyaki" (Japanese pizza) and "onigiri" (rice balls). There, she helps out around the place, and often acts as the delivery girl. Ami has a crush on a boy named Hiro, but he is clueless of her affection, and he also gets bullied at school quite often. Now, with her new powers, Ami has the ability to finally protect the boy she likes. Since I'm almost out of room, I'll leave it there, and say that the first issue of *Spellbound* should hit shelves in August. Oh, and be sure to read the "Next Issue" note below for something special!



Sidekicks

Sidekicks is written by J. Torres and illustrated by Takeshi Miyazawa, and was originally a concept piece showcased in the debut issue of the anthology series *Love in Tights*. Now, *Sidekicks* gets a chance to prove itself as its own series. The story centers around a group of students at Shuster Academy, each of which have a special power or ability which make them unique. Unfortunately, the school has a very strict policy about not allowing any students to use such powers. Of course, teenagers with such powers aren't likely to listen to rules telling them not to use their gifts. What's so wrong with using your powers to help make school a bit easier... or using them to do a bit of highly-prohibited crime fighting? The first issue of *Sidekicks* should be out as you read this. *—shidoshi*



<< Ami, from Spellbound

Minna no Mail

I try to fit in your letters and artwork whenever I can (and whenever they are passed on along to me), but this was one piece of fanart that I just HAD to get into the issue. Sure, it's a great fanart pic for *Nadesico*. But what's even cooler is that it comes from Aysha Haffed all of the way in the Sultanate of Oman! How cool is that? So, I'm now making a call—if you're from another country, let me know! I'm curious to know where else in the world AnimeFan is being read. Just send me a letter to the address below (and put "Forward to Shidoshi" on it to make sure it gets to me).

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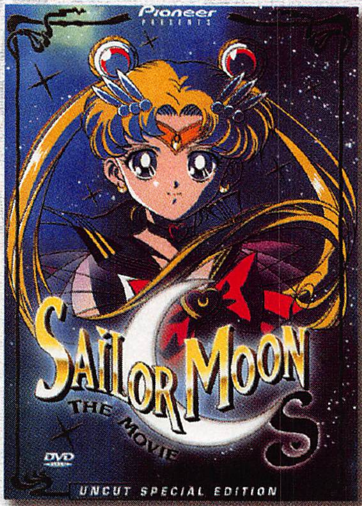


Next Issue

So what is the big surprise? Well, next issue, I'll have an exclusive conversation with Tomoko Taniguchi herself! I've already contacted her, and we're going to work out something. As well, complete details on my trip to Japan. And, as usual, the regular mix of anime, manga, news, and other great stuff. *—shidoshi*

Anime Drive-In

Sailor Moon S - the Movie



DVD | Shoujo • Movie • Pioneer | 13+ • 70 min • Sub | Dub | **B+**

I think that out of the three *Sailor Moon* movies Pioneer has brought to us, *Sailor Moon S* is definitely my favorite. Maybe it is the fact that the movie centers on Luna (I like cats), and an evil ice queen (I like snow). Okay, seriously, I liked this movie best even if I can't give a list of good reasons (except I will say that the first movie's dramatic ending still hasn't been beaten). Those familiar with *Sailor Moon* will pretty much know what to expect here. The characters and action are silly yet oh so lovable, and the animation and art quality have charm yet aren't terribly impressive. I do think that some fans won't like this movie as much, because it puts less importance on action and more on the characters. Well, at least those fans who watch *Sailor Moon* to see the Pretty Soldiers beating up on innocent demons and space aliens.

As surprising as this may be, this DVD release comes from Pioneer and, gosh, it's good. Who ever would have imagined. (sarcasm, of course) Pioneer continues with the wonderful cover art accentuated with foil stamping, but it was the gorgeous DVD menus that got me the most. The best part is getting *Sailor Moon* subtitled - while I don't have anything major against the dub, it just can't match the Japanese voices. Reason enough to get the *Sailor Moon* DVDs, I'd say. *Sailor Moon S* is my top pick from the three Sailor Moon movies, but if you're a real fan you'll have them all no matter what. *- shidoshi*

Samurai X - trust

VHS | Drama • OAV • ADV Films | 17+ • 60 min • Sub | Dub | **A+**

AnimeFan Best of the Issue!

I know *Rurouni Kenshin* - I have not SEEN *Rurouni Kenshin*, be it the TV series, the OAVs, or the movies. Okay, I've seen a few minutes of one TV episode, but not enough to understand why this is such a beloved series. So this is my introduction - *Samurai X* OAV Volume 1 (the name given for the dub release of *Rurouni Kenshin*).

I honestly have not been so blown away by this type of anime since the days when I first laid my eyes upon a little title called the *Hakkenden*. If you understand how much I love that show, you understand my feelings here. I may know little about the *Kenshin* TV series, but I know enough to understand how big of a departure this is. Gone are any signs of cuteness, humor, silliness. In its place is a more dark, serious, violent mood and atmosphere. An astounding tale of love, death, politics, and betrayal. A young man. His almost mystical talents in the way of the sword. His struggle to fight for the sake of the innocent without becoming one of those who oppress them. All of this is brought to life through outstanding measures. Gorgeous art and character designs joined with equally impressive animation. A depth to story and script which raises this above so many. A musical score that perfectly complimented the visuals and makes you want to run out to find the soundtrack.

A good "samurai anime" is nothing without good fight scenes, and to say that *Samurai X* has good fight scenes is like saying that Evangelion had a couple of fans. With more animation in its fight scenes than many other anime titles have for their entire show, these aren't fighting scenes, they are elegant dances of death ruled by sword instead of song. And yet, these scenes are raised even higher thanks to marvelous direction. Camera angles, pans, close ups, first person views - scenes that rival anything else out there, and force you to just sit back and watch in awe. As much I as I love cute and happy and think violence can be over-used, every now and then you just NEED a bit of the "ultra-violence." *SX* provides this in spades, certainly NOT for the squeamish, but also does it with purpose and meaning. And what respect does ADV give to this title? How about a top-notch dub and a phenomenal box? Seriously, what's gotten into the water at ADV? Lately they've been turning out some of the best anime boxes they've ever done.

Is there any possible thing that could be wrong with this show? I guess I could say that scene transitions are sometimes a bit too quick and "cut" for me. A non issue, though. Or maybe that it isn't on DVD yet. *heh* This show is bloody. Viewers expecting the funny and more light-hearted nature of the *Kenshin* TV series will be shocked at how different this is. If you survive past those two tests, buy this anime. For the sake of all that's holy, BUY THIS ANIME. — *shidoshi*





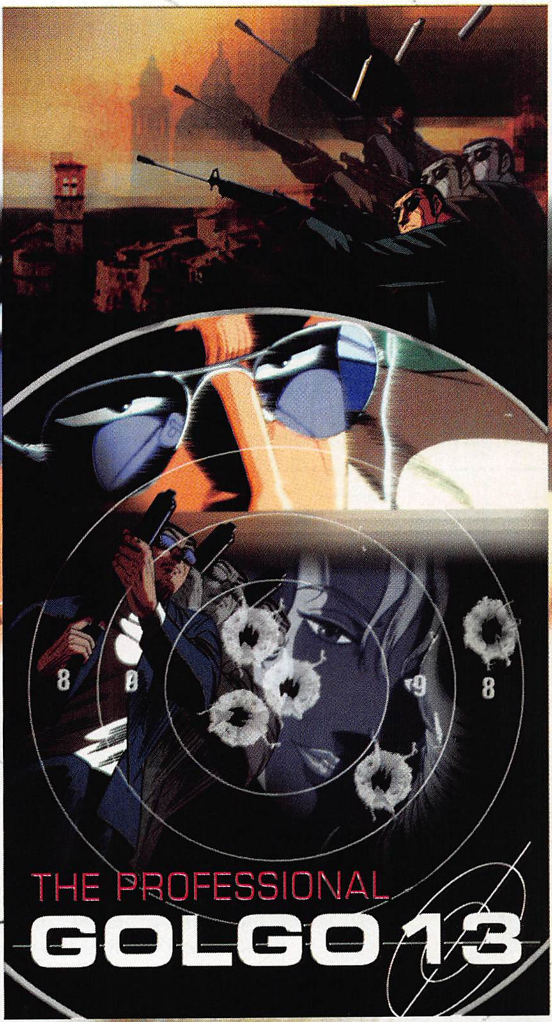
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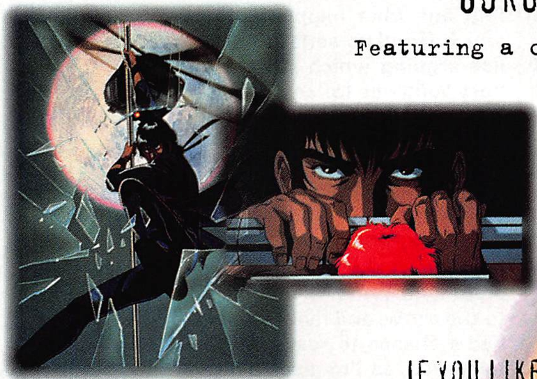


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GOKU: MIDNIGHT EYE

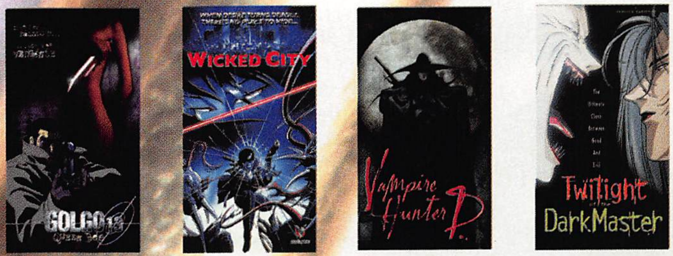


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Anime Drive-In

Haunted Junction Collection

DVD | Comedy • OAV • Bandai Ent. | 13+ • 300 min • Sub | Dub | **B+**

Welcome to Saito High, your not so ordinary Japanese high school. Haruto, the son of a minister, just wants to lead a normal school life. However, he is conned into becoming the President of the Holy Student Council, together with a Shinto priestest and a Buddhist monk. In a school crawling with ghosts, spirits, and other supernatural forces, their job is to keep order amid such disorder. Of course, such a task is far easier said than done. Their first order of business? Get the seven main spirits of the school together and joined as a team. With their help, the Holy Student Council must then protect the school and its spirits from evil demons and those who look to rid the human world of such beings.

Haunted Junction has the feel of a show such as *Ranma 1/2* or *Urusei Yatsura*: a school setting, a group of eccentric students, weird and wacky things happen to them. Some will argue that *HJ* is average in its impersonation of such shows, but I thought that it did a great job and actually gained a personality of its own. The three students of the Holy Student Council—Haruto, Kazumi, and Mutsumi—all have great personalities and are likable all of the way through the series. The chemistry between the three is great, and when put in the middle of a cast of deranged spirits, it's not hard to pull an enjoyable show from the mix. One of my favorite parts of this show is the fact that it's got some really questionable (in taste or political correctness) humor going on, and it feels no shame in that fact. Not *Something About Mary*-esque humor, but still things that many won't appreciate. I like it when a series isn't afraid to cross a few taboos, so I was glad to see that the creators of *HJ* had some guts.

For the price of about two VHS volumes, you get SIX volumes worth of episodes in one two-DVD collection. I mean, if there is NO other reason to pick up a DVD player, the fact that you get some insanely good deals is reason enough. What you get for your money is a nice little package. The episodes are clean and clear, and I prefer Bandai's thicker subtitles over Pioneer's. However, there is one issue with this package that some may not like—there's no dub. Not a horribly big deal to me, but some may not like that fact. For the price this collection goes for, I'd certainly take the chance on *Haunted Junction*. It's funny, it has a great cast, and it's a competent DVD release to add to your anime library. —*shidoshi*















Gundam Wing—Vol. 1

DVD | Action • TV (5 eps) • Bandai Ent. | 13+ • 125 min • Sub | Dub | **A-**

Gundam Wing was a major step in the US for anime in a number of ways. It is the first anime series (that I can think of) brought over to debut on US television not marketed specifically to the younger viewer. Yes, *GW* has a level of drama and maturity not only unusual for the Cartoon Network, but animation on US television period. As well, it is a series that has retained quite a bit of its Japanese heritage (down to the show titles still in full Japanese script).

One of the more interesting aspects of this show has to do with the show itself, however, and not the circumstances around its US arrival. *Gundam Wing* goes against many things we are used to in these types of shows. The story seems to being familiar enough: man has extended its reach into space, but now the Earth has become cruel and unjust to those living in the space colonies. However, the show opens with the arrival of five "Gundam" mechs on Earth. The situation then becomes one where the "enemy" forces—the Earth alliance and OZ—are struggling to survive against the powerful yet small band of Gundam. Usually, the story is set up in the exact opposite. As well, many of the acts and deeds of those who we are given as heroes one might question, and at times we are left to almost feel sorry for the enemy. We get a good look into the society of the enemy forces in *GW*, and are forced to accept the fact that even they are not always deserving of the fate which is handed to them. With reluctance on the part of the five main characters to work together, and almost a hint of savagery and heartlessness behind some of their actions, the viewer is not always sure which side they should be rooting for.

Gundam Wing is one heck of an anime. This is one of those shows where you just can't get enough, and after every episode you want to see another to find out what happens next. The argument over which *Gundam* series has the best mech models is like arguing which incarnation of *Macross* has the best Valkyries (of course, it's the original). For me, I'm quite fond of the Gundams found here, especially Wing Gundam. Bandai's DVD package is a nice one for this show. Aside from the slightly annoying menus, we've got a nice transfer in the way of both video and audio. As well, of course we've got a Japanese audio track and English subtitles to go along with the dub track, the original intro (complete with Two-Mix music) and ending are returned to the show, and five TV episodes per disc. I haven't had a chance to really sit down with this show on television, so I'm glad to now have a home release. This is a great release not to be missed. —*shidoshi*

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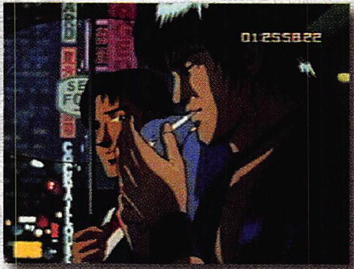
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Goku: Midnight Eye

VHS | Action • OAV • Urban Vision | 16+ • 70 min • Sub | Dub | **B-**







I've always had a love/hate relationship with Buichi Terasawa: sometimes I really dig his work and the style in which he does in, and sometimes I can't stand what he does and want nothing to do with it. If anything, though, you've got to give Terasawa credit for having a style that is certainly unmistakable. If you think about the American 70's idea of what space was like—the guys, the girls, the robots, the spaceships, the strange and often cheesy fantasy worlds—that is the best way I can describe his works. Maybe that's why I have such an off and on opinion of his work. When done right, this kind of style can be so enjoyable (*Barbarella*, for example). Done right, and it just comes off as silly and ridiculous.

The last experience I had with one of Terasawa's anime titles was *Space Adventure Cobra*, a movie I loved. So, when Urban Vision sent me along a copy of *Goku Midnight Eye*, I went in with a pretty open heart. Goku is the story of a private detective who finds himself trying to bring down an evil terrorist leader. When trapped in a hypnotic spell, he chooses to stab out his left eye to save himself. When he wakes up, he has been given a new left eye—a robotic one which can access and control any computer in the world. With his newfound powers, and the high-tech weapon he has been given, Goku sets out to bring down the bad guys.

The biggest problem with *Goku* is that is doesn't always feel like it has that Terasawa touch to it. While it is a pretty good show by general "dark action" anime standards, it just isn't as over the top and outlandish as I would like it to be. *Goku* is your typical (in the good way) Terasawa hero, and the style is there, but the settings and adversaries aren't anything we haven't seen many times before. Final verdict: *Goku Midnight Eye* is an enjoyable outing for fans who dig this kind of anime, I just didn't warm up to it as much as I did *Cobra*. —*shidoshi*



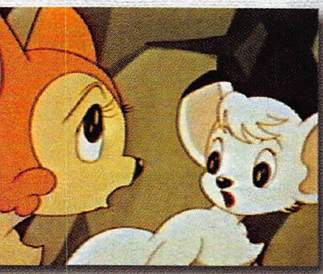
Kimba the White Lion—Vol. 2

VHS | Family • TV (4 eps) • Right Stuf | 5+ • 100 min • Sub | Dub | **B+**

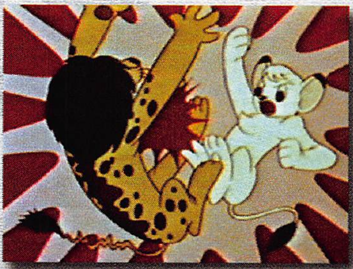
I have a lot of respect for the Right Stuf. I think the best way to truly cultivate the future of anime, we must always remember its past and never forget the classics of days gone by. While there may be no sub version like I'd like to see, the rebirth of *Kimba the White Lion* and the chance for a new generation of fans to see this wonderful series. *Kimba* may be 30+ years old, it may come from Osamu Tezuka, a name many anime fans today may not even recognize, but the power and importance of this series can still be felt today. Just as I played a little system called the Atari 2600 and knew that I was in on the start of something special, I'm sure that Japanese viewers watched *Kimba* and knew that there were catching but a glimpse of the future.

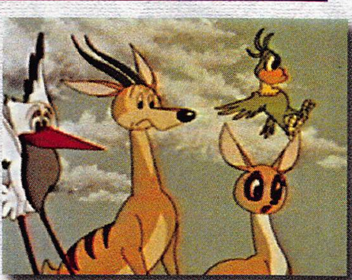
Yet, as much as I'd love to just sit back and say how much of a classic this is and how everyone should rush out and pick it up even if just for the history factor alone, I've got to be realistic. Why? I honestly don't know how many people out there will be able to appreciate this series. With animation, script, and dub qualities hauntingly similar to *Speed Racer*, I wonder if today's more jaded and critical fans will see the show as a source of humor when it is trying to be serious. I can tell you that this is a family-friendly, heartwarming, endearing, wonderful classic anime series that was of large importance when it was released and will forever be remembered. Yet, I know that some of you will turn it on and be in awe at how dated the looks compared to what you have today, and how ridiculous the old English dub sounds at times. I wish I could go back to the time when I was young and innocent and could appreciate such a show for what it is, and not how it looks or feels compared to the latest high-budget title. I wish I could go back to a time when I wasn't trained to pay more attention to dub quality or reused frames then the core story presented to me. I wish all of that, and I wish the same for anyone who would watch *Kimba*. However, that's all it can be, a wish.

At an insane $15 for each four-episode volume, this is a series that really deserved to be in your collection. So, I just have to hope that enough fans can watch *Kimba* and fully appreciate it for what it is. I can only wonder how many fans there are out there like that, though. —*shidoshi*









AnimeFan News Service

Goddess Movie Update

Please note that all of the following comes from a translation of the Newtype story done by someone who isn't really familiar with the series. So, while I've done my best to decipher what was translated, not everything may be absolutely correct.

The Story

Keiichi, as usual, is trying to get people to join the Nekomi motor club. Unfortunately, it seems far too often than members are drawn to the club due to the beautiful Belldandy, and NOT an interest in racing. After his hard attempts at recruiting, the club is bursting with... four new members. To celebrate, and to welcome the new recruits, they have a party. The usually shy and quiet Sora Hasegawa (the girl with the short brown hair and glasses) gets a bit too drunk, and begins hitting on Keiichi. Suddenly, the room turns to chaos, with bottles and glasses and other objects flying all over the place. Has this event been caused by jealousy on the part of Belldandy?

The Movie

It's been six years since the OVA series, and as Ah! My Goddess! became a very popular series, people have waited for more of the story for a long time. With the movie, it is hoped to expand more on the characters, both the ones we already know, and the new ones as well. With this movie, we will see more character depth, especially with character like Belldandy and Keiichi. The movie is planned for release this fall at "Shouchiku" in Japan

Tickets

The header says "Now you can buy tickets...", which I guess means that tickets are already available. A ticket with a poster is Y1600 yen for adults, and Y1300 yen for student. With the phone card (above), an adult ticket is Y3000 and student is Y2700. Of course, this means little to those of us outside of Japan.

Fujishima's Next Anime

While speaking about Fujishima, this quick clip comes out about his new anime. The new series is called eX-D (Ex-Driver), an OAV set for release in Japan on July 25th. In the future, all cars run using electricity and are controlled by AI. However, as computers invariably have problems from time to time, major accidents can occur with these types of cars. Thus, a group of people referred to as "eX-D" are needed—people who can drive and handle older styled gasoline powered cars. At the center of the eX-D group are Lisa Sakakino, with her Subaru Impreza, and Lorna Endo, with her Lotus Europe. Fujishima was in charge of the anime planning, story play, and character designs for eX-D.

Who Claims Nausicaa?

Well, sad news everyone... it seems that we may not be getting a DVD release of Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind anytime soon like we recently thought. It has come out recently that Anchor Bay may not have the rights to a DVD release of the Miyazaki classic like they once thought, or if they do, that things may be a bit messy.

This announcement came from Chris Meadows, a member of the Miyazaki mailing list. This in the response he got from Anchor Bay recently on the subject of Nausicaa on DVD: "It is currently being held up due to rights negotiations with another company in order to release the full length original cut. We still do have the right to release Warriors of the Wind but will not be pursuing that option."

As well, here is the brief comment that Tokuma International had on the situation: "It is our understanding that Anchor Bay no longer releases Nausicaa DVD." Which, of course, no doubt was meant to mean that as far as they know, Anchor Bay no longer has the right or ability to release a Nausicaa DVD.

So, where does this leave us? Well, it seems that who has the rights to what when it comes to Nausicaa on DVD is still not totally clear. Thankfully, Anchor Bay isn't of the mindset to just slap that travesty Warriors of the Wind onto DVD and release it should they not have access to the full version. As well, Disney may still sub-license Nausicaa to Anchor Bay for release on DVD, as they have done with other titles from their catalog. For now, I guess, we should not plan to hold our breath for Nausicaa on DVD anytime soon, and just hope that a deal is worked out quickly.

Viz Gives Back

I thought that this was a very cool story, so I wanted to quickly mention it. Viz recently donated $100,000 worth of Graphic Novels to a variety of US Public Libraries.

Here's a quick clip from the press release:

Comics are under-represented in libraries, but the demand for manga has never been greater, especially with young readers. "I am certain that San Francisco teens will be thrilled with these titles," confirmed Jennifer Collins, Middle School Outreach Librarian, San Francisco Public Library.

Wondering if your local library will be getting gifts of manga? Here are the locations that will received the donations:

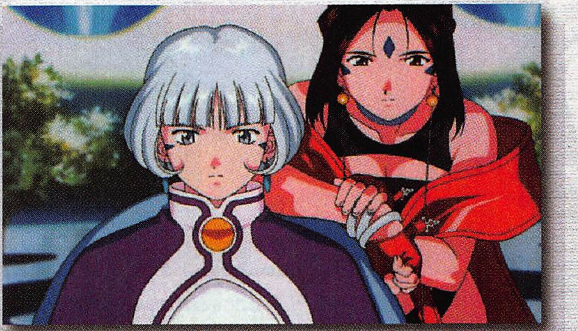
Tuscon AZ, San Francisco CA, Dallas TX, Bakersfield CD, Santa Clara CA, San Antonio TX, Los Angeles CA, Carmel IN, Seattle WA, Oakland CA, Brooklyn OH, Spokane WA, San Diego CA, Columbus OH, and Madison WI.

—shidoshi

The rivals... well-known Peorth and newcomer "Opere-ta-" (which many have guessed to mean "Operator). Working for the rival goddess office, the "Earth Assistance Center." Consider Belldandy a rival. >>

Not much information on this one, but it seems that this is Urd and her angel. The article says that Urd's angel "belongs to fire type." Who she is talking to, why is she angry, and why she would need her angel as back-up at that point. >>





Hocus Pocus

codes, hints & strategies



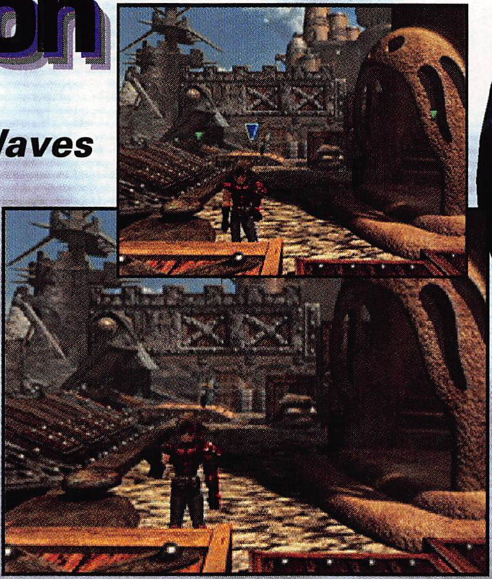
Welcome to the pages of cheats, codes, and hints galore!!! Upon these leaves you will find all the assistance you'll need for the hottest games today. Not satisfied? Need help on another game? No problem! If you need codes or hints on any game, mail GameFan, or e-mail hocus-pocus@gamefan.com. *Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...*

Code of the Month!

The Legend of Dragoon

PlayStation

Dart Waves



To get Dart to wave at the camera simply head over to Illisa Bay. When you are at the screen shown in the screens press the X button in the location shown. If done correctly, Dart will wave at you.

PlayStation

A BUG'S LIFE
Skip Level
Put in L1, L1, R2, R2, ✖, ●, ▲ as a code.

APE ESCAPE


Invincible
Pause the game and press up 6 times, ▲, ▲, ●, ✖, ✖, ✖, ■, ↓, ↑, →, and ←



ASTEROIDS
Classic Asteroids Game Codes
+1 LIFE = ↑, ↓, ←, →, ●, ■, ✖, ▲
99 LIVES = ↑, ✖, ↓, ▲, ←, ■, →, ●
INVINCIBILITY = ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, ●, ■, ▲, ▲

Level Select
On the Title Screen when PRESS START is flashing, Hold Select and press the following buttons in order. You will hear a prompt when the cheat is activated:
■, ▲, ●, ▲, ▲, ■, ●
Once in the game, you can change levels and zones and turn collision off by:
1. During gameplay, press Select and Start simultaneously
2. Select level, zone, and collision state using the directional pad
3. Press L1

Unlock Fourth Ship
On the Title Screen when PRESS START is flashing, hold Select and press the following buttons in order. You will hear a prompt when the cheat is activated:
▲, ●, ●, ▲, ■, ●, ■

Unlock Classic Asteroids Game
On the Title Screen when PRESS START is flashing, hold Select and press the following buttons in order. You will hear a prompt when the cheat is activated:
●, ●, ●, ▲, ■, ■, ●

BLASTO
Gameplay Codes
Play as Evil Blasto
At the Start screen, press ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ←, →, ↑, ↓, →, and ←.

Small Blasto
At the Start screen, press →, →, ←, ↓, and ↑.

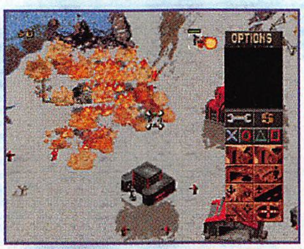
Special weapons
At the Start Screen, quickly press ↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, →, ↑, →, ↓, ←, and ←. When you





start a new life, you'll always start with a new special weapon.

BUGS BUNNY: LOST IN TIME
Cheat Codes
To activate a cheat, hold L2 + R1 at the Level select or Era select screen and enter its code below.
All abilities – ✖, ■, R2, L1, ●, ✖, ■, ●, ■
Extra key – ✖, ■, R2, L1, ●, ✖, ●, ■ (x2)
Full energy – ✖, ■, R2, L1, ●, ✖, ■, ● (x2)
Level select – ✖, ■, R2, L1, ●, ✖, ■ (x3).
Lose life – ✖, ■, R2, L1, ●, ✖, ● (x3)
Maximum carrots
✖, ■, R2, L2, ●, ✖, ■ (x2), ●
View ending sequence
✖, ■, R2, L1, ●, ✖, ●, ■, ●
View incomplete ending sequence
✖, ■, R2, L1, ●, ✖, ● (x2), ■

COMMAND & CONQUER RED ALERT


Gameplay Codes
To enter these codes, click on the Teams menu with Circle. Now move the cursor over the following icons on the menu bar and press the Circle on each.
1000 Credits – ■, ■, ●, ✖, ▲, ●
Atomic Bomb – ●, ✖, ●, ▲, ■, ▲, ■
Reveal Map – ■, ▲, ●, ✖, ▲, ■
Parabomb – ■, ✖, ●, ●, ✖, ▲

CHEF'S LUV SHACK
Unlock All Mini-Games
To unlock all the mini-games, select Cartman and at the next screen, press ↑, ↑, ←, ↓, ↑, and ↑. A list of all the mini-games should appear.

COLONY WARS: RED SUN
Cheat Menu Codes
At the Magenta Station screen and press R2, R2, L2, L2, R1, R1, Select, and Select. This will enable the Cheat Screen where you can enter the following:

Armory - All weapons

CYBERTIGER
All Courses
At the course selection screen, press ● to display the password screen and enter "POQAKI" as a password.

Cyber Courses
Cyber Badlands Course
To unlock this course, press ● on the course selection screen, then enter the password HARESO.
Cyber Sawgrass Course
To unlock this course, press ● on the course selection screen, then enter the password SECARE.
Cyber Canyons Course
To unlock this course, press ● on the course selection screen, then enter the password NAMOPI.

Cyber Summerline Course
To unlock this course, press ● on the course selection screen, then enter the password PORASO.

DARKSTALKERS 3
Extra Characters
Not getting that bone-chilling sensation from the plentiful lineup of characters? Well, there are a few more interesting character selections.
To play Oboro Bishamon, simply highlight Bishamon on the character select screen, hold Select and press a button. Oboro Bishamon has slightly different moves than normal Bishamon.
To play Dark J. Talbain, hold Select and press a button on when selecting Talbain. A slightly darker shade, Dark Talbain does a bit more damage than his normal version.
Then there is Shadow and Marionette, which aren't necessarily new characters. To select Shadow, highlight your fighter before choosing your character and press the Select button five times (holding it down on the 5th time). Then select your character, and you'll have "Shadow" following you. Basically, after every person you beat, Shadow will possess them, and you'll control that new fighter.
For Marionette, again highlight your character and press Select seven times (holding it down on the 7th time). Basically, Marionette becomes whatever character you're fighting!

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2
All Tracks
At the Name Entry menu, enter "M-A-C-S-r-P-O-O". All tracks should now be available.

Cartoon of Development Team
At the Name Entry menu, enter "C-R-E-D-I-T-Z" to see a special cartoon of the development team.

EVIL ZONE
Play as Ihadurca
Complete story mode with Setsuna.



Play as Boss
Complete story mode with three different characters.
Character biographies and gallery mode
Complete story mode.
Narrator mode in extra options
Complete one player mode.
Alternate costumes
Successfully complete the game with any character to unlock their alternate costumes in versus mode or single player battle mode.

FADE TO BLACK



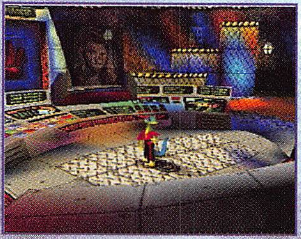
Cheat Codes
To enable these codes, enter the password ■, ▲, ●, ✖, ●, and ▲. You will receive an "Invalid Code" message. Now, exit and go back into the Password screen and enter one of the following codes.
UNLIMITED SHIELD: ■, ●, ●, ■, ▲, and ✖.
INVINCIBILITY: ▲, ✖, ▲, ▲, ■, ●.
CINEMA TEST: ■, ✖, ●, ▲, ●, ✖.

GEKIDO

Play as Akujin
Finish urban fighters mode with any character on the hard setting to unlock Akujin in all modes.

GEX 2

Gameplay Codes



During gameplay, "Pause" the game, hold L2 or R2 while entering cheat. Each code word is a command on the controller to perform. The letters to each word correspond to these commands as follow:
↑ on D-pad = U or N
↓ on D-pad = D or S
← on D-pad = L or W
→ on D-pad = R or E
▲ Button = A
● Button = O
✖ Button = X
Infinite lives = UNDEAD
Invulnerability = WEASEL
One Liners (Press Select) = ALOUD
Rambling GEX = SENSELESS
Level Timer = EARWAX (On Main Map, Press Select for level stats, press ■ for best times)

GHOST IN THE SHELL

Level Select
To access the level select, at the Main Menu screen, press R2, R1, ■, ■, ↑, ↓, ■, ■, R2, and R2. A confirmation sound will play if you input the code correctly. Now, start a normal game, and you'll be able to select any of the missions.

IN THE HUNT

Infinite Continues
When your continues reach zero, press and hold ▲ and SELECT, then hit START.
Speed Change
PAUSE the game while playing, press and hold ▲ and R2, and unpause. Now, while playing, you can pause again, press ▲ and L2, and your speed will go down.
Stage Select
During the title screen, press and hold UP, LEFT, and SELECT. While holding those, press ●. If done correctly, a stage select option should appear above the logo.

KILLER LOOP

Unlock Vehicles
At the main menu screen, hold the Start button and enter the following commands for the respective vehicles:
H&K Class 2 - ↓, ←, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←
H&K Class 3 - ↓, ←, ↑, →, ↓, ←, ↑, →
H&K Class 4 - ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, ←, ↑, →
Pulse Class 3 - ↓, ←, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑, →
Pulse Class 4 - ↓, ←, ↑, →, ↓, →, ↑, ←

MDK

Gameplay Codes



During gameplay, pause the game and press ↓, R1, ↑, and ■. Unpause the game, and pause the game again. While paused for the second time, enter the following codes below:
Nuke - ↓, ↑, ■, ▲, ↓, ●, ●, →
Gatling Gun - ←, R1, ↓, ■, ▲, ↑, ↓
Super Speed - →, ●, ▲, ●, ✖. Press R2 to activate
Grenade - ▲, ●, ■, ■, R1, →
Sniper Grenade - ↑, ■, R1, ←, ●, ▲, ■
Cow Drop - ↑, ↓, ↓, R1, →
World's Most Interesting Bomb - ↓, →, ●, ●, ←, ←, ↑, ■, ▲

MEDIEVIL 2



Cheat Mode
During gameplay, pause the game, hold L2 and press ▲, ●, ▲, ●, ●, ▲, ←, ●, ↑, ↓, →, ●, ←, ←, ▲, →, ●, ←, ←, ▲, ●, ↓, ●, ●, →.

MOTO RACER 2



Gameplay codes
Enter the following at the Title Screen:
Ultra Fast Bikes
↑, ↑, ↑, →, ←, ▲, ✖
Slowed AI Bikes
●, ■, →, ←, L1, R1, ✖
Open up mirror mode, reverse tracks, and Ultimate Championship mode
R2, L2, →, ↑, ←, ▲, ●, ■, ✖
Big Time Air
←, ←, ↑, ↑, →, →, ↓, ↓, ■, ▲, X ✖

MOTORHEAD



All Cars and Tracks
To access all cars and tracks enter the password LASTCODE.
Disable All Cheats
To turn off all codes, enter the password NOCHEATS.
Motion Blur
To make the game appear to run faster, enter the password SOFTHEAD.
Overhead View
For an overhead camera view, enter the password SUPERCAR.
Access Nolby Hills Track
To access the Nolby Hills track enter the password TURBOMOS.

NANOTEK WARRIOR

Level Passwords
Entering the following passwords to gain access to the following levels:
Level: 1 ■, ✖, ✖, ✖, ■, ■, ▲, ✖, ■

Level: 2 ▲, ■, ✖, ✖, ■, ■, ▲, ✖, ✖
Level: 3 ●, ■, ✖, ✖, ✖, ■, ▲, ✖, ✖
Level: 4 ▲, ✖, ■, ✖, ✖, ✖, ●, ✖, ■
Level: 5 ●, ✖, ■, ✖, ✖, ■, ▲, ✖, ●
Level: 6 ▲, ■, ■, ✖, ✖, ✖, ■, ✖, ▲
Level: 7 ▲, ✖, ✖, ■, ■, ▲, ▲, ✖, ✖
Level: 8 ■, ✖, ✖, ■, ■, ▲, ✖, ▲, ■

Full Shields
Pause the game and press Select, ●, →, ↑, ↑, L1, L1, and ✖.

NEED FOR SPEED: HIGH STAKES



Titan Hotrod:
Enter Hotrod as a name to unlock all cars in test drive and versus modes. The phrase "Cheat Activated" will appear to confirm correct code entry. Note: The game cannot be saved when this code is in use.

Phantom car:
Enter Flash as a name. The phrase "Cheat Activated" will appear to confirm correct code entry. The car will be available in Hot Pursuit mode. Note: The game can not be saved when this code is in use.

Helicopter:
Enter Whirly as a name. The phrase "Cheat Activated" will appear to confirm correct code entry. The helicopter will be available in Test Drive mode. Note: Enabling this code will disable the option to save your game.

Drunk mode:
Press Start to load the race after selecting the game options, then immediately hold ↑ + R1 + L2 before the loading screen appears. Keep the buttons held until the loading screen disappears. The screen will become blurred, with ten cars appearing in place of one.

Dashboard Enabler
Select any mode, select a track, then when you are in the car screen, as soon as you hit Race, press ↑ + ▲ + ✖. Hold these buttons through the loading screen and once you see the game scenery, release the buttons. Now when it goes to your inside car view, you should see the dashboard. If you don't see a dashboard the first time, I suggest you try again, because sometimes it doesn't work.

Turbo Mode
To have Turbo Mode, you must have done the Dashboard cheat. I heard that once you have the dashboard, you have turbo mode with it, but this is a separate way to have just turbo mode. So once you've accomplished getting the dashes, quit the race. Do all the steps again to get the dash. This time when you get into the car, you should see a dashboard but something more. Once the race starts, hit accel and then press your horn (UP) and then your car should go turbo (twice as fast as it did before), once you release the up button the turbo is off. You can always press up for turbo, it is unlimited and it stays in the game in any mode until you turn it off.

Disabling Dashboard and/or Turbo Mode
Once you've got turbo mode and the dashboard enabled, do the dashboard code again, and then the dashboard and turbo mode should be disabled.

ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE

Level Select
To enable the level select, go to the main menu screen and enter the following: Press and hold R1, press ↓, →, ←, →, ■, ●, ■, ▲, ●, ■, →, ←.

Green Farts
Yes, this code makes Abe fart green every time. At the main menu screen, press and hold R1, press ↑, ←, →, ■, ●, and ✖.

ODDWORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS

Level Select
At the main screen (the one with Abe poking his head out), press and hold R1, while pressing the following: ↓, ↑, ←, →, ▲, ■, ●, ▲, ■, ●, ↓, ↑, ←, →

Movie Cheat
At the main screen again, press and hold R1, while pressing the following: ↑, ↓, ←, →, ■, ●, ▲, ●, ■, ●, ↑, ↓, ←, →

Level Skip
During the game hold R1 and press ●, ●, ✖, ✖, ■, ■. Note this will take you to the next respawn point, and if you skip a section, you lose the chance to save Mudokons.

ONE



Debug Menu
To enter the cheat code screen enter the password "Heybuddy" and the cheat code screen will appear. This screen lets you choose what level you wish to start at, where in the level, infinite health, and all weapons.

R-TYPES

Level Select
Highlight "R-Type" or "R-Type II" at the title screen and quickly press L2 ten times, and R2 ten times. Then during gameplay, press Start to access any level or view the FMV sequences.

SILENT BOMBER



Advanced mode
To unlock advanced mode, successfully beat the game. Advanced mode allows you to select any stage and grab more data chips.

TEST DRIVE: LE MANS

All Cars and Tracks
To unlock all the vehicles and tracks, enter your name as "TATOO".

UPRISING-X

All weapons
Enter the following commands during gameplay: ←, ●, →, ■, ↓, ▲, ↓, and ✖.

VAGRANT STORY



Training Dummies
Throughout the game, you'll find training dummies near save points. These training dummies allow you to practice combos and power up your weaponry. The locations of the training dummies are as follows.

Wine Cellar, "Black Market" - human dummy
Wine Cellar, "Worker's Restroom" - human dummy
Abandoned Mines B1, "The Dark Tunnel" - beast dummy
Catacombs, "Hall of Sworn Revenge" - undead dummy
City Walls North, "From Boy to Hero" - phantom dummy
City Walls South, "The Boy's Training Room" - dragon dummy
Town Center East, "Gharmes Walk" - evil dummy

WU-TANG: SHAOLIN STYLE

All Characters
At the main menu, press →, →, →, →, ←, ←, ←, ←, ■, ●, ■, ●.

Violence control
Enter at start screen: ▲, ●, ✖, ✖, ■, ▲, ●, ■

Nintendo 64

BANJO-KAZOOIE



Cheat Codes

Beat the "Treasure Trove Cove" world, and then go back to Banjo's house. Go up to the picture of Bottles (the Mole) hanging above the fireplace and press C-Up to look at it. Press R to play a bonus mini-game with a moving puzzle. Complete each puzzle to receive a new code. Then, return to Treasure Trove Cove and enter the sand castle. Now spell out one of the following codes on the floor of the sand-castle:



Banjo has big head
BOTTLESBONUSONE
Banjo has big hands and feet
BOTTLESBONUSTWO
Kazooie has big head
BOTTLESBONUSTHREE
Banjo is skinny with small head
BOTTLESBONUSFOUR
Big hands, and big feet
BOTTLESBONUSFIVE
Combination of all "Bottles" codes
BIGBOTTLESBONUS
Changes Banjo into a washing machine
WISHYWASHYBANJO
Infinite blue eggs
CHEATBANJOBEGSFORPLENTYOFEGGS
Infinite red feathers
CHEATNOWYOUCANFLYHIGHINTHESKY
Infinite gold feathers
CHEATAGOLDENGLOWTOPROTECTBANJO
100 Mumbo tokens
CHEATDONTBEADUMBOGOSEEMUMBO
8 honeycombs
CHEATANENERGYBARTOGETYOUFAR
Unlimited air
CHEATGIVETHEBEARLOTSOFAIR
Infinite lives
CHEATLOTSOFGOESWITHMANYBANJOS

BOMBERMAN 64 SECOND ATTACK

CPU Characters

To select CPU characters in battle mode, hold Z and press A.

BUCK BUMBLE



Refill Life and Ammo

While playing press A + B + R to restore your health and ammo.

Level Select

At the title screen hold Z and press →, ↓, ↓, →. Release Z and press →, ↑, ↓, ←, ←, ↑, →, → to finish the code.



Invincibility

At the title screen hold Z and press R, R, L, L, ↑, ↓, ←, →.

Infinite Lives

At the title screen press L, R, B, A, Z, ←, →.

All Weapons

At the title screen press ←, →, ↑, ↓. Then hold Z and press →, →, ←, ←.

BUST A MOVE '99

Extra Levels

At the title screen, press B, ←, →, B. Then, select arcade mode, then choose the new "Another World" option.

CALIFORNIA SPEED

Clover track

Successfully complete week two of the Sport Series.

Fuji track

Successfully complete week two of the Sport Series.

Oval track

Successfully complete week two of the Heavy Series.

Five-O car

Successfully complete the Sport Series.

Predator car

Successfully complete the Sport Series with the Five-O car.

Mano car

Successfully complete the Sport Series with the Predator car.

Squirrel car

Successfully complete the Light Series.

Insect car

Successfully complete the Light Series with the Squirrel car.

Forklift car

Successfully complete the Light Series with the Insect car.

Mountain Dew truck

Successfully complete the Heavy Series.

Ol' truck

Successfully complete the Heavy Series with the Mountain Dew truck.

Camper truck

Successfully complete the Heavy Series with the OL' truck.

COMMAND AND CONQUER

Stage Select

On the Title screen—where you see "Press Start"—enter the following code using the Control Pad: B, A, R, R, A, C-Right, up, down, A. Now select "Replay Mission" from the main menu and press the L Button to display all of the missions.

CRUIS'N USA



Bonus Cars

At the vehicle selection screen, highlight any car except the Ferrari. Then, press C-Up + C-Left + C-Down. The automobile will become a jeep, police car or school bus!

DARK RIFT

Play as Sonork

At the title screen, press L Shift, R Shift, C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, and C-Right. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a confirmation sound.

Play as Demitron

At the title screen press A, B, R Shift, L Shift, C-Down, and C-Up. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear a confirmation sound.

DESTRUCTION DERBY 64



Ambulance

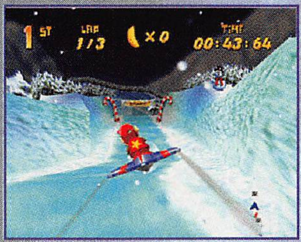
Beat the Legend Circuit level with the pick-up truck to get the ambulance

Bonus cars

Win world championships with various cars to unlock the bonus cars in the game.



DIDDY KONG RACING



Cheat Codes

Enter the following codes at the Magic Code screen:
WHODIDTHIS - Credits
BOGUSBANANAS - Speed up from bananas
VITAMINB - no banana limit
ROCKETFUEL - All balloons blue
OPPOSITESATTRACT - All balloons rainbow
TOXICOFFENDER - All balloons greed
BODYARMOR - All balloons yellow
BOMBSAWAY - All balloons red
BYEBYEBALLOONS - Disable computer weapons
NOYELLOWSTUFF - No bananas in Multiplayer
JOINTVENTURE - Two-player adventure
BLABBERMOUTH - changes horn sounds to character taunts

Keys

First key: Go to Ancient Lake and stay to the right, not that far from the start/finish line you will see a small ramp off in the grass with the key on top.
Second Key: The key for Sherbet Island is in Crescent Island. Take your car into the water to the left and eventually you see an opening on the side of a rock: inside is the key.
Third Key: The snow key is directly behind the start finish line to your left. Go all the way around the track, right before you get back to the start finish line you will see an opening to the left. Take it and get the key!
Fourth Key: The key for Dragon Forest is in Boulder Canyon. Race your hovercraft till you go over the drawbridge. Turn around pick up a couple of turbos and hop to hit the bell. The drawbridge will rise. Turbo your way back up the drawbridge and you'll find the key at the top.

DOOM 64

Gives you everything.

Input at cheat menu screen:

Features menu option:

?TJL BDFW BFGV JVVB

Super password:

W93M 7H20 BCY0 PSVB

DUKE NUKEM 64

Gameplay Cheats

In order to access the following cheats, you need to open up the Cheat Menu. So first, go to the main menu screen and press ←, ←, L Shift, L Shift, →, →, ←, and ← to access the Cheat menu. Now, after entering the Cheat Menu code, enter the following commands for the following gameplay codes:

All Items

R, C-Right, →, L, C-Left, ←, C-Right, →

God Mode

R, R, R, R, R, R, R, ←

Level Select

L, L, L, C-Right, →, ←, ←, C-Left.

DUKE NUKEM: ZERO HOUR

Cheat Codes

When "Press Start" appears at the opening screen, enter code
(A tone confirms correct entry).
Action Nukem mode—↓, ↓, A, Z, Z, ←, A
Character set 1—A, L, R, ←, B, ↓,
Character set 2—B, A, A, R, L
Character set 3—L, L, ↑, ↓, R, B, A
Character set 4—B, B, B, R, ←, A
Character set 5—→, B, ←, L, A, Z
Character set 6—↑, ↓, B, A, A, ←
First person perspective—↓, ↑, L, B, Z, ←, C-Up, C-Right, C-Left, Z
Freeze thrower with unlimited ammunition—↓, ↑, A, L, R, Z
Rifle with unlimited ammunition—C-Up, C-Down, C-Left, C-Right, L, R
Shotgun with unlimited ammunition—↑, ↓, ←, →, L, R

Activating Cheat Options

To activate a cheat option, perform the corresponding action on the levels below.
Big head mode
Rescue all babes on Level 2
Big gun mode
Kill all opponents on Level 3
Flat shade map
Find all secrets on Level 4
Ice skin
Rescue all babes on Level 5
Weather
Find all secrets on Level 6
High-speed zombies
Rescue all babes on Level 8
Maximum blaster ammo
Kill all opponents on Level 9
Maximum shotgun ammo
Rescue all babes on Level 10
Maximum rifle ammo
Rescue all babes on Level 11
Maximum revolver ammo
Kill all opponents on Level 12
Maximum swan-off shotgun ammo
Kill all opponents on Level 13
Maximum SMG ammo
Find all secrets on Level 15
Maximum Gatling gun ammo
Kill all opponents on Level 16
Maximum Volt C. ammo
Find all secrets on Level 17
Maximum sniper ammo
Rescue all babes on Level 19
Maximum freezer ammo
Kill all opponents on Level 20
Maximum gamma ammo
Rescue all babes on Level 21

Titanic Level

To access the Titanic level "GOING DOWN," find all the time machine pieces before you get to "THE RACK" and a second exit portal should appear in the room just off the first.

GOLDENEYE 007

31 Extra Characters

To get 31 new secret characters, enter the following code, making sure



to do each command separately at the character select screen:
Hold L+R and press c-left
Hold L and press c-up
Hold L+R press left on the control pad
Hold L and press right on the control pad
Hold R and press down on the control pad
Hold L+R and press c-left
Hold L and press c-up
Hold L+R and press →
Hold L+R and press c-down
Hold L and press ↓

KIRBY 64

Extra Modes

To open up the Boss Battle and Movie modes, collect all crystals in the game.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2000

Big Head Mode

Pause the game and press C-Left, C-Right, C-Left (2), C-Right. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear the bell ring five times. Repeat to disable.

Big Gloves Mode

Pause the game and press C-Up, C-Down, C-Up (2), C-Down. If you entered the code correctly, you will hear the bell ring five times. Repeat to disable.

Easy Training

Select "Offense" in training mode. Then, use the following moves to hit the blue opponent: down + A, down + A, down + B, down + B. Repeat until he has been hit thirty times.

Easy Knockdown

Fill your meter, then press R + L + A or B to knockdown your opponent regardless of whether he is blocking.

LEGO RACERS



Disable all cheats

Make a new driver and put in code as the name on the make license screen
NMRCHTS

Cheat codes

Make a new driver and put in code as the name on the make license screen
FLYSKYHIGH - Rocket Car
FSTFRWRD - Turbo Mode
LNFRRRM - Get Reversed Rocket Racer Run Track
MXPMX - Max Power Ups Always
NCHSSS - No Chassis or Bricks

NDRVR - No Driver
NSLWJ - Keep Speed While Off Track
NWHLS - No Wheels Car
PGLLGRN - Get Turbo Power-ups Only
PGLLRD - Get Shooter Power-ups Only
PGLLYLL - Get Mine Power-ups Only
RPCRNLY - Get Grapple Power-ups Only

MARIO GOLF

Gold Mario

Unlock Metal Mario by collecting all 108 birdie badges. Then highlight him at the character selection screen, hold C-Left and press A.

MARIO KART 64

Course ghost racers

Enter time trial mode and finish a course. Then, choose "Retry" to race the course again. Now the phrase "Now Meet the Course Ghost" will appear. The course ghosts are automatically saved to the cartridge for future replay without beating the course time again. The Course times to beat are as follows:
Mario Raceway - 1'30"00
Luigi Raceway - 1'52"00
Royal Raceway - 2'40"00

MARIO PARTY

Bonus Stages

Bowser's Magma Mountain Stage

Complete the first six stages and collect 1000 coins. You must buy items in the shop (especially the Magma Mountain Key) while playing in those six stages. After that, the Magma Mountain can be played.

Eternal Star Stage

Get 100 stars in the Magma Mountain stage. Then a special event will appear and the Eternal Star stage will appear.

Supercross 2000

Cheat Codes

At the "Select Event" menu, press C-Up to display the cheat screen.
No crashes — N0CR4SH
Additional views — M0R3C4MS
Extra hop button — H0P
Cancel Off Track reset — N00FFTR4CK
Cancel Skipping Track reset — SK1PP1NG0K
Big bikes — B1GB1K3S
Big dirt sprays — B1GSPR4Y
All riders block you — BL0CKM3
Giant riders — G14NTS
Headless rider — H34DL3SS
No riders - N0R1D3RS
Gravity from the Moon — M00N
Gravity from Venus — V3NVS
Gravity from Mars — M4RS
Gravity from Mercury — M3RCVRY
Gravity from Jupiter — JVP1T3R
Gravity from Saturn — S4TVRN
Gravity from Uranus — VR4NVS
Gravity from Neptune — N3PTVN3
Gravity from Pluto — PLVT0

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

Private Carrera

In order to play Private Carrera, you have to unlock Officer Dick by earning all tapes with any other skater. Once done, choose Officer Dick and enter any game mode. Now during gameplay, pause the game, hold down L Shift, and press C-Left, C-Down, C-Right, C-Down, up, right, and left. Now, go back to the skater select screen and Private Carrera should be available.

Gameplay Codes

During gameplay, pause the game, hold L Shift, and enter the following commands:
All tapes - C-Right, left, Up, C-Up, C-Up, right, down, up
10x Trick Multiplier - Down, right, up, right, up, left, C-Left
Add Restart Points - C-Left, C-Right, C-Down, up, down
Fast Motion - right, up, down, down, up, down
Fast Tricks - C-Up, Left, C-Down, C-Down, Up, down, right

Dreamcast

CENTIPEDE

All Levels and Extra Lives

Hold in R, L, A, B, X, Y, and rotate the joystick repetitively. It will say "all levels" or "get a life." "Get a life means it gives you lots of lives. "All levels" means you get all levels.

HYDRO THUNDER



Turbo Start With +4 Boost

Hold reverse throttle when the countdown begins, and just as the "1" is about to disappear, press and hold the accelerator.

Race as the Tiny Titanic

You have to beat the easy courses in the top three to get the medium courses. After you have the medium courses then beat them by placing in the top two to get the hard courses. Beat these by placing first in all the races to get the bonus tracks. Beat the first three bonus tracks in first and you will be able to race with the most awesome boat in the game—the Tiny Titanic.

Quick start

Note: This trick assumes the game is under the default controller setting. Hold L during the pre-race countdown. Release L and hold R when the countdown reaches "3". Release R and hold L when the countdown reaches "2". Release L and hold R when the countdown reaches "1".

Fishing Boat

Unlock all bonus tracks and at the boat selection screen, highlight the "Thresher" boat. Hold L + R Shift and press the View button twice. Now select the "Thresher" boat to drive a fishing boat.

MARVEL VS. CAPCOM



Select special Partner

To select the desired Helper Character, hold the Start button with the following buttons after selecting your second character to select the Helper:
Unknown Soldier: Jab Punch
Lou: Strong Punch
Arthur: Jab and Strong Punch
Saki: Fierce Punch
Ton-Poh: Jab and Fierce Punch
Devilot: Strong and Fierce Punch
Anita: All Punch buttons
Pure & Fur: Short Kick
Michelle Heart: Jab Punch and Short Kick
Thor: Short Kick and Strong Punch
Cyclops: Jab Punch, Short Kick, Strong Punch
Magento: Short Kick, Fierce Punch
Storm: Jab Punch, Short Kick, Fierce Punch
Jubilee: Short Kick, Strong Punch, Fierce Punch
Rogue: Jab Punch, Short Kick, Strong Punch, Fierce Punch
Psylocke: Strong Punch
Juggernaut: Jab Punch and Forward Kick
Iceman: Strong Punch and Forward Kick
Colossus: Jab Punch, Strong Punch, Forward Kick

MDK 2



Boxer-wearing Kurt

At the main menu, hold L Trigger and R Trigger and press X, X, Y, X.

Farting Doc

During gameplay as Doctor Hawkins, press Left and Right triggers, left on the D-Pad, and A simultaneously. Doc will release some gas for your displeasure.

Slow-Motion Mode

While playing as Max, hold Fire and press up, up, up, up.

PLASMA SWORD

Evil Gamof

At the character selection screen, highlight Gamof, then hold Start and press A.

Play as Kaede

At the character selection screen, highlight Rain, then press down, down, left, left, up.

Play as Rai-On

At the character selection screen, highlight Byakko, then press up, down, left, left, right, left, up.

RAYMAN 2

Globox Disk Access Mini Game

At the title screen, press and hold L + R Trigger buttons and press B, B, B, B. The mini game can also be played with two players

RE-VOLT

All Cars

For all cars, enter "CARTOON" as your name.

All Tracks

For all tracks, enter "TRACTION" as your name.

RESIDENT EVIL: CODE VERONICA

Play As Hunk

Finish the game on the normal difficulty setting in less than three and a half hours and collect all the files in order to play Hunk from *RE 2*.

First-Person Mode

To reach the first-person mode, beat the game in easy or normal mode.

RIPPIN' RIDERS

Secret Force track

Complete all five standard tracks and get the high score.

Play as Snowman

Complete CB 2 practice course and get the high score. Snowman is the fastest boarder.

Special Board

Beat the default scores on every track to unlock the Special Board. The Special Board has the maximum speed and stability rating.

Play as Gray

Complete Secret Force track.

Practice course

Complete all 5 standard tracks to unlock the Cool Boarders 2 practice course.

Longer super pipe

Beat the records in super pipe events.

Hidden snowboards

Complete a track with the top score to unlock a snowboard (there are eighteen snowboards in the game).

Alternate outfits

Successfully complete the game with any character to unlock a new outfit for that character (each character has three new outfits).

SEGA RALLY 2

Alternate car colors

At the car selection screen, highlight a car and press L.

Less detailed tracks

At the track or mode selection screen, press Y or R when making a choice. Then the track will be less detailed and the race timer will appear on the right side of the screen.

Secret Rally track

Finish in first place in every year under "10 Year Championship" mode.

Faster frame-rate

At the main menu, press up, A, down(2), left, right, B(2).

30 fps

Press Up, A, down, down, left, right, B, B, up at the "Press Start Button" screen to change the frame rate to 30 per second. You should hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.

All Season Code (Import only)

At the title screen, press up, left, down, right, B, A, B, right, down.

All cars, hidden bonus level

Having a hard time getting first place to get all those souped-up vehicles? Well, we have the answer to your woes. To get all the cars in the game, at the title screen press up, down, up, B, A, left, B, B, and down using the D-pad. You'll hear a confirmation tone if you've input the code correctly.

Hidden Bonus Level

Ever had the urge to knock down a row of construction cones just for the hell of it? Well, then Sega knew exactly what you were thinking. To access the hidden section found in the Rivera stage, make sure you select Arcade Mode. It doesn't matter if you select either Championship or Practice Mode.

When you finally get to the Rivera race, drive like you normally would up until the very last turn. As you approach the final turn, you'll see two red cones. When you knock both these cones down, you'll hear a sound for each cone. Now, if you turn the car around so you're racing the track backwards, and drive for a bit, you'll see an opening to a hidden area. When you approach this area, you'll see a bunch of cones throughout this track. You'll gain 100 points for every cone you knock and you'll have 29 seconds separate from your normal time, do to it. You don't have to go backwards to access the track, since the hidden area will always be open.

60 fps Mode

To play in a constant 60 fps with a little loss of detail, at the Title Screen, press up, A, down, down, left, right, B, B, and down. A confirmation tone should sound if you input the code correctly.

SEGA SPORTS NFL 2K

Cheat Codes

To activate a cheat, enter its code at the Codes screen.

Alternate font for text — SCRAWL
Fat players — LARD
High-pitched commentary — SQUEEKY
Sega Sports Team — SUPERSTARS
Slow motion setting — DEDMAN
Turbo speed setting — TURBO

How to call time out in Vs. mode

To call time out in Versus mode for players 2, 3 or 4, you must use the analog stick to choose the timeout option on the pause menu, not the directional pad. Use the A button as usual to select the option. Once this is done, the directional pad can be used for the rest of the game.

Hide Your Plays

When you select your play with the A button, keep it depressed and search for a dummy play. While it is still depressed you can even push B to get to a different formation. Once you do you can release A and change formations, allowing you to really confuse your opponent.

Extra attribute points

In the attribute setting in create-a-player if you move the numbers all the way to 0 and back to the top you will get 1 extra point. Do this for all of them and you'll end up getting about 10-11 extra points.

STREET FIGHTER III DOUBLE IMPACT

Play as Gill

To unlock Gill, first beat the game. Then at the character select screen go to Sean and press up twice.

SWORD OF THE BERSERK GUTS' RAGE

Extra Mini-Game Modes

Puck's mini-game

Finish the game on the easy difficulty setting.

Battle arena mode

Finish the game on the normal difficulty setting.

No limit mode

Finish the game on the hard difficulty setting.

TRICKSTYLE

Cheat Codes

Unlock everything—CITYBEACONS
Always win—TEAROUND
Infinite time—IWISH
Power-up moves—TRAVOLTA
Big head mode—INFLATEDEGO

Speed board

Successfully defeat the Boss on the U.S. track.

Combat board

Successfully defeat the Boss on the U.K. track.

Quick start

Tap R three times during the starting countdown, once each time the numbers 3, 2, and 1 appear. Then, hold R when the word "Go" appears.

WWF ATTITUDE

Bonus wrestlers, extras:

Win different titles and PPV events in Career mode with any wrestler under any difficulty setting to unlock hidden wrestlers and extra modes.

Win European Title to unlock Sable, Marc Mero, Trainer, New Creations Options, and Squeak Mode.

Win King of the Ring PPV to unlock Kurrgan and Taka Michinoku.

Win Intercontinental Title to unlock Chyna, Jaqueline, Extra Attribute points in Creation, and Big Head Mode.

Win SummerSlam PPV to unlock Shawn Michaels and Sgt. Slaughter.

Win Royal Rumble PPV to unlock Jerry Lawler and Paul Bearer.

Win Heavyweight Title to unlock Head, Beep Mode, and Ego Cheat.

GameShark Codes

GAMESHARK

PlayStation

Darkstalkers
Stop Timer
800cd85a005a
Infinite Special P1
800cd36e0050
No Special P1
800cd36e0000
Infinite Special P2
800cd6e00050
No Special P2
800cd6e00000
Press Up For Super Jump P1
d40cd1a81000
Press Up For Super Jump P1
800cd1a80000
One Win Needed P1
d00cd4a60000
One Win Needed P1
800cd4a60001

Grind Session
All Trick Points NYC
8009f6182710
All Trick Points San Fran
8009f61c2710
All Trick Points-Burnside
8009f6202ee0
All Trick Points-Atlanta
8009f6284e20
All Trick Points-London
8009f62c7530
All Trick Points-Detroit
8009f6309c40
All Pro Points-NYC
8009f6584e20
All Pro Points-San Fran
8009f65c7530
All Pro Points-Burnside
8009f6609c40
All Pro Points-Atlanta
8009f668ea60
All Pro Points-London
8009f66c1170
All Pro Points-London
8009f66e0001
All Pro Points-Detroit
8009f6703880
All Pro Points-Detroit
8009f6720001
All Items Hit-NYC
8009f698000a
All Items Hit-San Fran
8009f69c000a
All Items Hit-Burnside
8009f6a0000a
All Items Hit-Atlanta
8009f6a8000a
All Items Hit-London
8009f6ac000a
All Items Hit-Detroit
8009f6b0000a
All Tech Lines-NYC
8009f6d8000a
All Tech Lines San Fran
8009f6dc000a
All Tech Lines-Burnside
8009f6e0000a
All Tech Lines-Atlanta
8009f6e8000a
All Tech Lines-London
8009f6ec000a
All Tech Lines-Detroit
8009f6f0000a
1st Place-Slam City
8009f6240001
1st Place-Huntington
8009f6340001
Easy Win - Endurance Levels
800a48a00014
Tournament Levels - Easy All Items Destroyed
800a3fe003ff
Unlock John Cardiel Extra Board
800a1c840001
Unlock John Cardiel Pictures
800a1c6c0001
800a1c700001
800a1c740001
800a1c780001
800a1c7c0001
800a1c800001
Unlock John Cardiel Video / Unlock Demon
800a1c880001
Unlock Skater 1 Pictures
800a1cac0001
800a1cb00001
800a1cb40001
800a1cb80001
800a1cbc0001
Unlock Skater 1 Extra Boards
800a1cc00001
800a1cc40001
Unlock Skater 1 Video / Unlock Stinger
800a1cc80001
Unlock Skater 2 Pictures
800a1cec0001
800a1cf00001
800a1cf40001
800a1cf80001
800a1cfc0001
Unlock Skater 2 Extra Boards
800a1d000001
800a1d040001
Unlock Skater 2 Video / Unlock Golgotha
800a1d080001
Unlock Willy Santos Extra Board
800a1b440001
Unlock Willy Santos Video / Unlock Skater
800a1b480001
Unlock Willy Santos Pictures
800a1b2c0001
800a1b300001
800a1b340001
800a1b380001
800a1b3c0001
800a1b400001
Unlock Daewon Song Pictures
800a1b6c0001
800a1b700001
800a1b740001
800a1b780001
800a1b7c0001
800a1b800001
Unlock Daewon Song Extra Board
800a1b840001
Unlock Daewon Song Video / Unlock Rex
800a1b880001
Unlock Cara-Beth Pictures
800a1bac0001
800a1bb00001
800a1bb40001
800a1bb80001
800a1bbc0001
800a1bc00001
800a1bc20001
Unlock Cara-Beth Extra Board
800a1bc40001
Unlock Cara-Beth Video / Unlock Hang Man
800a1bc80001
Unlock Ed Templeton Pictures
800a1bec0001
800a1bf00001
800a1bf40001
800a1bf80001
800a1bfc0001
800a1c000001
Unlock Ed Templeton Extra Board
800a1c040001
Unlock Ed Templeton Video / Unlock Stanley
800a1c080001
Unlock PigPenn Pictures
800a1c2c0001
800a1c300001
800a1c340001
800a1c380001
800a1c3c0001
800a1c400001
Unlock PigPenn Extra Board
800a1c440001
Unlock PigPenn Video / Unlock Dave Carnie
800a1c480001

Kurt Warner's Arena Football
Show Field Goal %
8018F728 0001
Show Hang Time
8018F700 0001
Hide Audible Names
8018f7c0 0001
Big Football
8018F6F8 0001
All Videos Unlocked
3018F66B 0001
8018F66C 0101
Team 1 Always Charged Up
801C8EC0 0001
Team 1 Never Charged Up
801C8EC0 0000
Team 2 Always Charged Up
801C8EC4 0001
Team 2 Never Charged Up
801C8EC4 0000
P1 Infinite Turbo
801C8F32 0064

MediEvil 2
Infinite Health
800f152c012c
Have Keys
800f162c0001
800f161c0001
800f16180001
800f16400001
Have Scroll of Sekhmet
800f16300001
Have Staff Of Anubis
800f16340001
Have Tablet Of Horus
800f16380001
Have Small Sword
800f155c0001
Have Broad Sword
800f15600001
Have Magic Sword
800f15640001
Have Cane Stick
800f15680001
Infinite Pistol Ammo
800f156c0064
Have Hammer
800f15700001
Infinite Crossbow
800f15740096
Infinite Flaming Crossbow
800f15780096
Have Axe
800f157c0001
Infinite Gatling Gun
800f15800096

Nightmare Creatures 2
Have Gun (Level 1)
300aa83c0001
Have Hell Fire Power Up (Level 1)
300aa8420001
Have Gory Spirit Power Up (Level 1)
300aa8440001
Have Toxic Power Up (Level 1)
300aa8450001
Have Crown Of Thorns Power Up (Level 1)
300aa8460001
Have Key (Level 1)
300aa8480001
Have Key 2 (Level 1)
300aa8490001
Have Key 3 (Level 1)
300aa84e0001
Have Small Key (Level 1)
300aa84a0001
Have Keys on Key Ring (Level 1)
300aa84b0001
Have Dynamite (Level 1)
300aa84c0001
Have Bolt Cutters (Level 1)
300aa84d0001

Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol
Infinite Mission Time
80065ebcddf8
Infinite Health (Both Rangers)
d00254c00039
800254c62400

Street Fighter Alpha 2
Sudden Death Mode
d21903241f02
801981f20001
d01903241f02
801981f00001
d01903241f02
801985840001
d01903241f02
Infinite Health P1
801981f20090
801981f00090
P1 Level 3 Supers
8019825a0090
Infinite Health P2
801985840090
801985860090
P2 Level 3 Supers
801985ee0090
Hit Anywhere
80130bea2400
P1 Easily Dizzied
801945500000
P2 Easily Dizzied
801949980000

Street Fighter Alpha 3

Infinite Custom Combo P1
801943a00000
8019492c0000
Infinite Custom Combo P2
801947e80000
801944e40000
P1 Specials In Air
301942e90000
P2 Specials In Air
301947310000
Max Exp World Tour Mode
80194160967f
801941620098
Max X-Ism Exp World Tour Mode
80194164967f
801941660098
Max A-ism Exp World Tour Mode
80194168967f
8019416a0098
Max V-ism Exp World Tour Mode
8019416c967f
8.02E+104

Striker Pro 2000

Home Team Scores 0
800c89a40000
Home Team Scores 99
800c89a40064
Away Team Scores 0
800c89a80000
Away Team Scores 99
800c89a80063
Pass All Certifications
800b9074000a

Vagrant Story

Press O For Health
d005e1c00020
8011fa5800fa
Press O For Max Risk
d005E1c00020
8011fa600064
Press O for Low Risk
d005e1c00020
Press O for Low Risk
8011fa600000
Press O ForExcellent R. Arm Status
d005e1e00020
8011fed800c8
Press O For Excellent L. Arm Status
d005e1c00020
8011feb400c8
Press O For Excellent Head Status
d005e1c00020
Press O For Excellent Head Status
8011FF9000c8
Press O For Excellent Body Status
d005e1c00020
8012006c00c8
Press O For Excellent Legs Status
d005e1c00020
8012014800c8
O During Attack = 999 hit
d005e1c00020
801fbc8403e7

Nintendo 64

Bomberman 64 2nd Attack

Enable Code (must be on)
f1073ee42400
Maximum Health (Story Mode)
d108F9120005
8108F912000a
810ad7620005
810ad762000a
800ad75f000a
Fire Always at Level 3 (Story Mode)
800ad7330003
800ad7370003

Perfect Dark

Enable Code – Lo-Res Mode
ee0000000000
Extra Health P1 Lo-Res Lvls 1-23
d313d6ec0005
8113d6ec3f80
d313d6dc0005
8113d6dc3f80
Infinite Ammo Left P1 Lo-Res Lvls 1-23
d013ee6f001e
8013e5fe0032
d013ee6f001e
8013de5a0032
Have All Weapons P1 Lo-Res Lvls 1-23
d013ee6f001e
8013ee700007
Extra Health P2 Lo-Res Lvls 1-23
d313f34c0005
8113f34c3f80
d313f35c0005
8113f35c3f80

Infinite Ammo Left P2 Lo-Res Lvls 1-23
d0140adf001e
8014026f0032
d0140adf001e
8013facb0032
Have All Weapons P2Lo-Res Lvls 1-23
d0140adf001e
80140ae00007
Extra Health P1 Lo-Res Lvls 24-up
d313aedc0005
8113aedc3f80
Infinite Ammo Left P1 Lo-Res Lvls 24-up
d013c66f001e
8013bdfe0032
Infinite Ammo Right P1 Lo-Res Lvls 24-up
d013c66f001e
8013b65a0032
Have All Weapons P1 Lo-Res Lvls 24-up
d013c66f001e
8013c6700007
Extra Health P2 Lo-Res Lvls 24-up
d313cb4c0005
8113cb4c3f80
Infinite Ammo Left P2 Lo-Res Lvls 24-up
d013e2df001e
8013da6e0032
d013e2df001e
8013d2ca0032
Have All Weapons P2 Lo-Res Lvls 24-up
d013e2df001e
8013e2e00007

Pokémon Snap

Rapid Fire Apples and Bombs
80382cb70000
Have Apples Bombs and Flute
803ae51f0004
803ae51f0002
Have Apples
803ae51f0001
Down on D-pad To Stop On Beach Level (C-Up to start moving)
d00489e0 0004
802020F5 0001
Down on D-pad To Stop On Tunnel Level (C-Up to start moving)
d00489e0 0004
801DDC55 0001
Down on D-pad To Stop On Volcano Level (C-Up to start moving)
d00489e0 0004
801FC5C5 0001
Down on D-pad To Stop On River Level (C-Up to start moving)
d00489e0 0004
801EF96D 0001
Down on D-pad To Stop On Cave Level (C-Up to start moving)
d00489e0 0004
80202225 0001
d00489e0 0004
Down on D-pad To Stop On Valley Level (C-Up to start moving)
801d9abd0001



Advertiser's Index

Banjo-Tooie Thousand One

Though Rare denies it, rumors are running rampant on the Internet that *Banjo Tooie* and possibly a few other games scheduled for this year will be delayed until next year. Considering the multiple delays of *Perfect Dark* and the ambitious fourth quarter planned by this UK-based developer, it wouldn't surprise us if this rumor indeed were true. Other titles mentioned as suffering possible delays include *Mickey's Speedway USA* and *Dinosaur Planet*.

WonderSwan Gets With The Color

For inexplicable reasons (who can understand the mind of the modern Japanese gamer—those who champion Bemani music games... ack!), gamers have made Bandai's WonderSwan a huge success in Japan, despite it being a black and white handheld. How this can compete with the Game Boy Color is a mystery to us, but it's true (never underestimate the emotional pull of a *Super Robot Wars* game...). Fortunately, Bandai has decided to get with the times and is moving their wonderful WonderSwan to the world of color with the WonderSwan Color. Even better for us, Mattel is in talks to bring the WonderSwan Color to the U.S. Hopefully, it will receive a better reception from consumers than the dearly departed Neo Geo Pocket Color... Speaking of Mattel, the company has also acquired the *Robotech* license. So maybe those Crystal Dreams can still be realized, as Mattel plans to bring the lucrative license to some next-generation consoles.

Lara Croft: Guns For Hire

Though the company continues to deny a possible buyout, much buzz has been generated recently about the possible purchase of Eidos. Potential candidates range from Infogrames (the French Menace continues to expand its budding empire) to Havas (it would be nice to have more than Blizzard as a breadwinner) to Microsoft (we need more X-box support!) to Electronic Arts ("With our name... and your guns... together we can rule the universe!").

No Love For Vagrant Story?

Despite a great sales start in the U.S., *Vagrant Story* wasn't quite as well received in Japan. Following the lukewarm reception there, rumors started popping up that Square had let go Producer Yasumi Mitsuno (who also worked on *Final Fantasy Tactics* and *Tactics Ogre*). Worried that Square might have fired the man who made produced one of our favorite PlayStation games of all time (*FF Tactics*), we called and got the story straight from the horse's mouth. Fortunately, those rumors are **completely unfounded** and Mr. Mitsuno is still with Square and is highly respected and valued there. Whew!

Sonic Riding Dolphin... Again

Though we set the record straight in Volume 8 Issue 7, a few websites are still clinging to the notion that Sega is entertaining thoughts of developing games for other consoles. Latest word is that since Sega split up its development teams, those teams can now go off and develop for whoever they wanted. High profile developers such as Yuji Naka (*Sonic*) and Yu Suzuki (*Virtua Fighter*) have even been quoted as expressing interest in making games for Dolphin or X-box. We urge you to view this rather skeptically, because we don't believe it. But hey, we don't make the rumors, we just report 'em.

Treasure's First Sequel??

Highly respected Japanese game developer Treasure (*Gunstar Heroes, Radiant Silvergun, Guardian Heroes*) has built a reputation for making quality games time and again without ever doing a sequel. When Eggo interviewed Treasure President Masato Maegawa, he said they haven't ruled out the possibility of doing a sequel, but it wouldn't happen unless the company could really top the original. The latest title being worked on by the hallowed Japanese developer, *Ikaruga*, has been code-named *RS-2*. Those initials wouldn't stand for *Radiant Silvergun 2*, would they? ECM (and all his shooter lackeys) can only hope...

Nintendo's Space World

Nintendo's version of E3 in Japan, a showcase of the year's hottest upcoming Nintendo products, Space World will be happening August 25-27. Products rumored to be showcased include: *Banjo-Tooie, Dinosaur Planet, Mickey's Speedway USA* for N64, *Mickey's 3D Adventure* and another unnamed title for Dolphin, as well as some Game Boy Advance titles. There's also supposed to be a 251st Pokémon character given away at the event. What? No Mario?!

Microsoft Hungry For Developers

With the launch of the X-box only a year away, speculation has been rife that Microsoft is in the market to purchase a number of companies so they'll develop exclusive titles for the upcoming console. Other than the aforementioned Eidos, another big name developer said to be watched is Midway. Other than its own high profile titles (*Gauntlet Legends, Cruis'n, Mortal Kombat*), Midway also owns Atari Games, which could lead to the re-release of some well-known games as well. Off the subject a bit, there's talk that Midway and Paradigm are working on a *Spy Hunter* game for a next-generation console.

Bemani U.S.A.?

It's no secret that Konami's Bemani games (music titles such as *Beatmania, Drum Mania, Guitar Freaks, Dance Dance Revolution*) are big business in Japan, accounting for why Konami was the most financially successful third parties last year. Well, with games like *Parappa the Rapper, Bust-A-Groove 1* & *2*, and *UmJammer Lammy* seeing release in the U.S., and considering how well-received Sega's *Samba de Amigo* was at E3, Konami is now thinking about bringing its Bemani games to the U.S. as well. Will American gamers be willing to make fools of themselves by dancing on foot pads in an arcade or shelling out over $100 for a drum peripheral at home? If the rumors prove true, we can only hope that Konami thinks so and we can get some variety in the mix.

PlayStation... One Can Only Wonder

By the time you read this, Sony will have released the PlayStation One in Japan. What is it you ask? A semi-portable version of the original PlayStation. It's about one-third the size of the original PlayStation (though slightly larger than a Discman), and it has all the features of a regular PlayStation: two memory card slots, two controller slots, all the cords, a Dual Shock controller, and a special new ability: cellular phone compatibility. By purchasing another peripheral, gamers will be able to hook their cell phones up to their PlayStation Ones to access a special Sony network. It's unknown whether any developers will program for this unique peripheral in upcoming PS games, however the cable is also supposed to be compatible with the PlayStation 2. The PlayStation One retails in Japan for $141 and will see a U.S. release in September. Unless Sony drops the price considerably, we question why anyone would spend that much money on a five-year-old console that's not really portable (unlike the Sega Nomad, the PS One can't run on batteries), especially since the PlayStation 2 comes out a month later with a steep $299 price tag. If money's not a problem, you can also buy the separate LCD screen made specifically for the PS One, but that won't be available till next spring.





Fury's Tales Of The Hardcore

Working at GameFan definitely has its perks... other than having access to one of the most celebrated game collections on the planet, I also have the honored privilege of getting yelled at by ECM on a daily basis (Hell, he even calls me at home to gripe at me). Yup, you've got to take the good with the bad and working around so many awesome games each day does make it pretty easy to keep a smile on your face. But every silver lining does have its gray cloud. Y' see, every once and while I'll be rummaging through our game library (or on ECM's desk... man, the treasures you can find amongst the no-carb diet books and portable game systems) and come across a classic title that used to reside in my very own collection. That's right, I'm guilty of having spent years amassing different titles and then selling them for... well, er, more games. I mean let's be realistic here, Neo Geo systems don't exactly pay for themselves and if you have the desire to own one (and then of course there are the games... can you say $200 plus a pop?) and don't have sufficent funds, it's time to sell your Super Famicom, Mega Drive or whatever games or consoles you have lying around. And now, after all these years, I know exactly where all my trophies have gone.

His name is Mark Lasmanis and his freakish collection of games, systems, peripherals and other odds and ends is just plain unfair. Now it's not like I'm jealous or anything but does one man really need all this stuff?! Fury doesn't have 900 plus games, Fury doesn't have a 36-inch Sony Vega XBR, Fury doesn't have a room dedicated to just games. See, I'm not jealous one bit. Well, Mr. Lasmanis, if you ever feel like sharing the wealth, I can be reached through our regular mailing address. And let's not call it charity, we'll call it compensation.



HARDCORE METER

SUBJECT: Mark Lasmanis

USELESS ITEM: The question is: How much of it is actually used at all? 32X, anyone?

NO. OF USES: Millions. Think he can afford to go out?





SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Popular (we can only wonder why) industry rumors website fatbabies.com recently ran a rumor claiming that *GameFan* was going out of business. This website has been known to post vicious lies, downright absurdities, and horrific slander, and the rumor of our untimely demise was just another example of such irresponsible "journalism." As you can see from the issue you're holding and the vast many you've received in the mail as a subscriber, we're still doing all right. Actually, we're doing better than all right; our subscription base has never been higher. Our magazine has never been as widespread on newsstands, and the company has never been as financially sound. And who do we have to thank for this? You, the loyal reader, who's been with us through thick and thin... through the good times and bad (argh, the cliche... it burns! It burns!)... through Nick Rox's blue shadows comment (that was before the mandatory prescription, brought on by that nasty little Sega CD *Lunar: EB* uh, thing)... and through a turnover of staff....

With that said, let us put that rumor to bed once and for all. We've been in the business of going out of business for eight years now, and we're still going strong. Whether you like it or not, we're going to be around for a very long time... and if you're reading this, you probably like it. If not, well, back to the Internet with the rest of your misbegotten kind—I'm sure there's a message board or chat room out there that's missing you.



THE POSTMEISTER!

Write to me, I'm running for president!!!
The Postmeister
6301 DeSoto Avenue Suite E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

JOYSTICK ENVY

Greetings Postinator,

I have but one humble request, great one. If you can find the answer, then you are truly "Chief Bad-Ass" of the "Who's the Man?" tribe. I am a die-hard disciple of everything *Street Fighter*, and Capcom is answering prayer after prayer for my beloved Dreamcast. There is one problem... I can't find a true arcade joystick for the Dreamcast anywhere on the 'net or in any magazine. I don't mean that crappy Interact Alloy Arcade Joystick, I mean one that has the same components that you would find in a *Street Fighter* arcade cabinet. I have seen the components to make your own on a couple sites, but I'm just not confident in my wiring skills to attempt that feat. HELP ME, POSTY!

Eastrock

Dear Eastrock,

I can empathize. Not being able to jam with a good set of arcade sticks can take away from the experience, no doubt. Don't be so hard on the third-party sticks, though; they aren't that bad. I definitely agree that Capcom should make a Capcom-brand stick and distribute it itself—or, if it isn't interested, give license to some other party to make a home version that properly emulates the sticks seen in the arcade. For now, though, you may want to just make your own, like we have. There's something deeply satisfying about whoopin' up on a friend with a stick you custom-built... However, I'd recommend you take a look at ASCII's excellent arcade stick—it's relatively inexpensive. If money's no object, Reubus recommends a MAS stick—"Serious Street Fighter *hardware," he calls his... Here's their website: www.massystems.com/ProStick.html*

NOSTALGIC OR JUST PLAIN JADED?

Yo Posty,

How's gaming going? I think that the games that come out nowadays are great, but I can't really remember most of them, to tell you the truth. Aside from *MGS* and some other games, I can't really recall much of what I've played. I can, however, recall much of the older-school games. *River City Ransom*, *Ninja Gaiden*, *Super Double Dragon*, *Contra*, *Joust*, *Dragon Warrior*, *Altered Beast*, *Final Fantasy III*, *Bandit Kings of Ancient China*, *Warsong*, Tecmo sports games, *Phantasy Star 1 & 2*... Compared to these games, many of the games of today seem empty to me. I mean, I've bought a lot of the recent games, most of which I didn't feel like passing once I started it. Is it just me, or are games just missing something nowadays? Thank you for your time...

Hideo

Are you feeling O.K., Hideo? You don't sound so good. I think you may have a little of that Nomo Fever. Heh heh... I've always wanted to say that to someone...

Now, back to business. I'm not sure, Hideo... I, too, seem to have many more fond memories of older games than those that I play today. The days I spent playing Phantasy Star, Gunstar Heroes *and* Strider *seem much more vivid and happy than those of* Syphon Filter *or* Banjo-Kazooie. *Were these games better? Did they have more to them? Or are you and I just plain old jaded? It's probably the latter. Ten years from now, maybe we'll have strong feelings of nostalgia for when we played* Final Fantasy Tactics *and* Blasto *(O.K., maybe not* Blasto*). Maybe you'll look back on* MGS *and think that it had more soul than* MGS2. *For now, though, let's just pretend that all games these days suck, and that the golden age of gaming is past us. This is certainly a good excuse for why I hate most current games...*

LOOKIN' FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

Dear Posty,

I know it is immature to vent frustration through gaming columns, but this time, I cannot resist. I, for one, was perfectly secure with my gaming habits. *Final Fantasy* was always my base. Sure, I love playing all systems and all types of games (I am a hard-core gamer), but RPGs have always been my paradise. With the way *FFVIII* looked and played, I thought Square could do no wrong... then I saw *Vagrant Story*, and thought they were gods! Then I hear Square cut a deal with Disney... my only love [Square] and one of my many hates [Disney]. I wouldn't be caught dead saying this a week ago, but now, I don't know. Maybe ECM is right, and Square doesn't know what they are doing...

O.K., now a question. You, being the almighty Posty, are probably the only one who can answer it. Where can I get a half-decent RPG without the same old boy-meets-girl, boy-saves-world, boy-gets-girl sappy story line? Or is there no salvation for the black-hearted?

Lady Valkyrie
Eugene, OR

Dear Valkyrie,

I'm not touching the Square argument with a ten-foot pole... even if that pole's three times as long as ECM and Disney's an easy target. As far as where to shop for a good RPG sans the elements you're talking about, that's a tough one. While the great majority of strategy RPGs (the FF Tactics, Shining Forces, *etc.) don't feature such plots it really is a common misconception that they* ***all*** *feature such storylines—kinda like Japan gets all the good games, 'games' like the new Lupin title, oh my. However, I have the feeling that this will all change shortly as Japanese developers continually awake to the notion that not all gamers are post-pubescent males desperate for some female interaction... or not.*

DAYBLEEMER

Posty,

bleem! for Dreamcast sounds like a great idea... but why not emulate a system that no one has but everyone loves? The Neo Geo CD had great games that everyone loved, and no one could afford. Now, you can find NG CD games on eBay for cheap. If bleem! can clean up the graphics for PlayStation, why can't it speed up the load time for NG CD? What about the TG-16 CD games? Do they not deserve to be emulated on Dreamcast? What about Sega's own Saturn and Sega CD games? I would love to play some of my Saturn games with beefed-up graphics on the Dreamcast. While I'm talking about classics... why is it that Namco can only pack four games onto the *Museum* GD-ROM? 1 GD-ROM = 1 gigabyte, which would make each game 250 megabytes. If *Pac-Man* was 250 megabytes when it came out, it would've never seen an arcade. I would bet that it's around a meg in real life. So why is it that they, or anyone else,

can't fit more than four games onto one disk? Thanks for listening to my beef.

Sean McMahon
Kansas

Dear Future Fortune 500 Member,

Sean, you gotta slow down. These guys are practically working out of their parents' basements. They can't be making bleemls for every misbegotten system that's ever come out. Let them get Bleemcast out there, and see how it does. Hopefully, it'll do huge business—the industry needs this kind of technology. And then, pray that they do focus on these systems, because I totally agree with you. I can't think of a better way for them to spend their time than making emulators that would allow us to play Turbo Grafx, Sega CD and Neo Geo games on PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast. I'd buy a Neo Geo CD emulator in a heartbeat. Don't get me wrong, the juggling monkey was cute, but to see him disappear forever would be bittersweet at worst...

ANOTHER STEVEN OSBOURNE FAN

Posty,

I must say one of the reasons I enjoy your magazine is the honesty and the fact that you give all the games a chance. My favorite game is *Worms 2* and *Worms Armageddon*. I consider myself a hard-core gamer because, like you, I like a lot of games that my friends don't like (*Quest 64, Blue Stinger*). The real reason I wrote this letter is because I disliked the somewhat cocky and ignorant remarks of a certain mainstream gamer (Steve Osborne). I rented the game [*Perfect Dark*], and must say from an amateur reviewer's point of view that it was no 96. I think you would be generous giving it an 86. I would say about a 75—the graphics were no noticeable improvement from *GoldenEye*. When I played multi-player, it was like playing it over a 56k modem. I have never played a game that slowed down on a console like that before. If you want to play a good first-person shooter, play *Unreal Tournament*. If you want to whine, I know a place where other mainstream gamers hang out and make fun of us true gamers—it's called GamePro.

Later ,
Charlie Rumeo

Dear Charlie,

Heh heh heh heh... couldn't have said it better myself. Just don't tell too many people you liked Blue Stinger *or* Quest 64...

BRAVE NEW WORLD (WITH NO CULPABILITY)

Dear Posty,

I am tired of these wannabe adults telling us what games we can and cannot play. I have played games all my life, and I have never shot anybody at my school. I have never gone insane. I love *Doom*. I play it every day. The next time someone says, "What music were they listening to?" or "What games are they playing?" just remember that they had people killing people before there were games and rock. Whatever happened to just being crazy or psychotic? They used to have that. They put them in rooms with red rubber walls. That's all I got to say. DOWN WITH CENSORSHIP!!!! I don't want a barcode on my head that says what I can buy.

ChaosMind

Dear ChaosMind,

"Soylent Green is made of people!!!" Oh wait, that doesn't apply here. This really isn't a case of censorship or Big Brother, but a frightening example of an American culture that refuses to take responsibility. "Oh, it isn't my fault that I shot those people, the game made me do it." "I'm not a bad parent that neglects all of the telltale signs that my kids are wacked... I'm a victim of society and of the media." Oh, and the media... don't even get me started. They're so starved for sensationalized material, they'll tell you that sunlight kills if it would get people to watch their newscasts. And I think the members of Judas Priest would agree...

By the way, what are you doing still playing Doom*? Get with the times, man.*

ANOTHER LOST SOUL

Posty,

I don't no what I am doing.

Jon

Jon,

Neither do I... Neither do I.

SOME LETTERS LAMENTING THE LOSS OF THE NGPC

I was wondering what is going on with SNK? I heard that they are closing down U.S. operations, and will only distribute software and hardware in Japan. This really frustrates me, as SNK happens to be one of the best game developers around. Who could ignore the Neo Geo Pocket Color or the *King of Fighters* series? In short, American gamers should be ashamed to support the Game Boy Color and ignore the excellent software and hardware that SNK has blessed upon us all.

Clay Mennen

I'm really sad. I invested money into the Neo Geo Pocket, but suddenly, it's gone. If there was ever a title that would have brought competition to the GBC, it would have been *Digimon*.

Y2Cow

When the Neo Geo pocket came out a few months ago, I remember thinking, "There is no way this thing can take the Game Boy, but it has some cool games, and SNK has always stood by its products even when sales weren't the best." When I heard SNK was pulling out, I was heartbroken. Quite simply, I am the hardest of all the hard-core SNK junkies—I own 80% of all of the original Neo Geo's games, and have tons and tons of just silly SNK stuff. When I bought my Neo Geo Pocket, my friends thought it was so cool that that eleven of them (with a little prodding from me) went out and bought one too, and now, I have to tell them there are not going to be any more games for us to link up and play...

eingorox

So it is really true? I was dumbfounded at the news that SNK was leaving America, and now I see that everything is as I heard. Why did this have to happen this way? My Neo Pocket is a wonderful system, and I do not want to buy the GBC or GBA. I never had the money to buy a lot of games, so I pooled all of my efforts into buying good games. The NGPC had such a killer lineup, and now it's gone!

Matthew M. Barkoot

Speaking solely as a true hard-core gamer, I would like to express my displeasure with the gaming community. I work at the local Babbage's, and recent events that have occurred have left a very bitter taste in my mouth... First off, my beloved Neo Geo Pocket has been most unholy ripped from the likes of American soil. Why did this have to happen? I LOVED that machine. Not only did it look sweet with its camo blue casing, but it also [gave] me many, MANY hours of gaming bliss. I don't need an explanation as to why it happened. I know why it had to leave. I just need the opportunity to truly express my love for this machine. Goodbye, SNK <sniff>... Please come back someday.

Hardcore Gamer Jon Hickey, a.k.a. J. Dogg

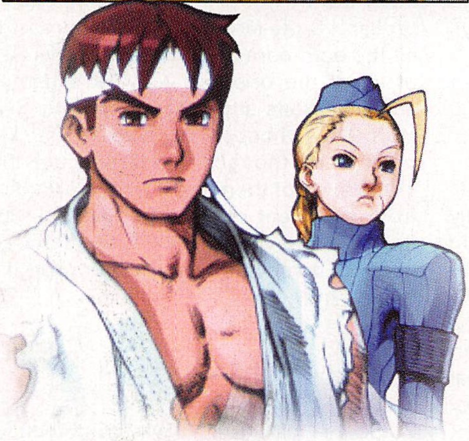
Guys, we feel your pain... Once again, a superior machine has died because it didn't have the marketing savvy or money to stake its claim. Just think of all of the Tetris*-playing Game Boy owners that'll never experience* Puyo Puyo *on the Neo Geo Pocket because they just didn't know any better...*





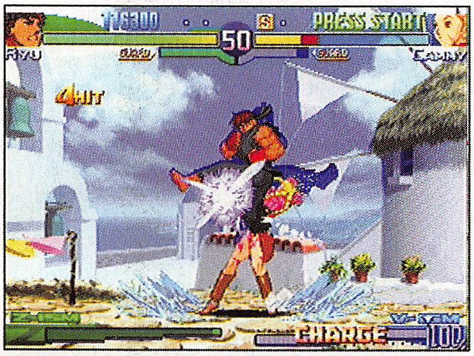
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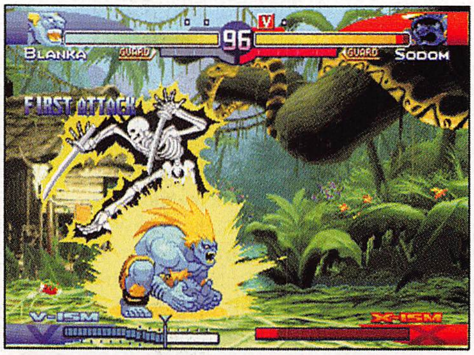
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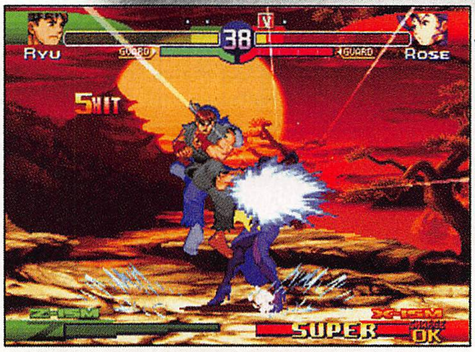
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